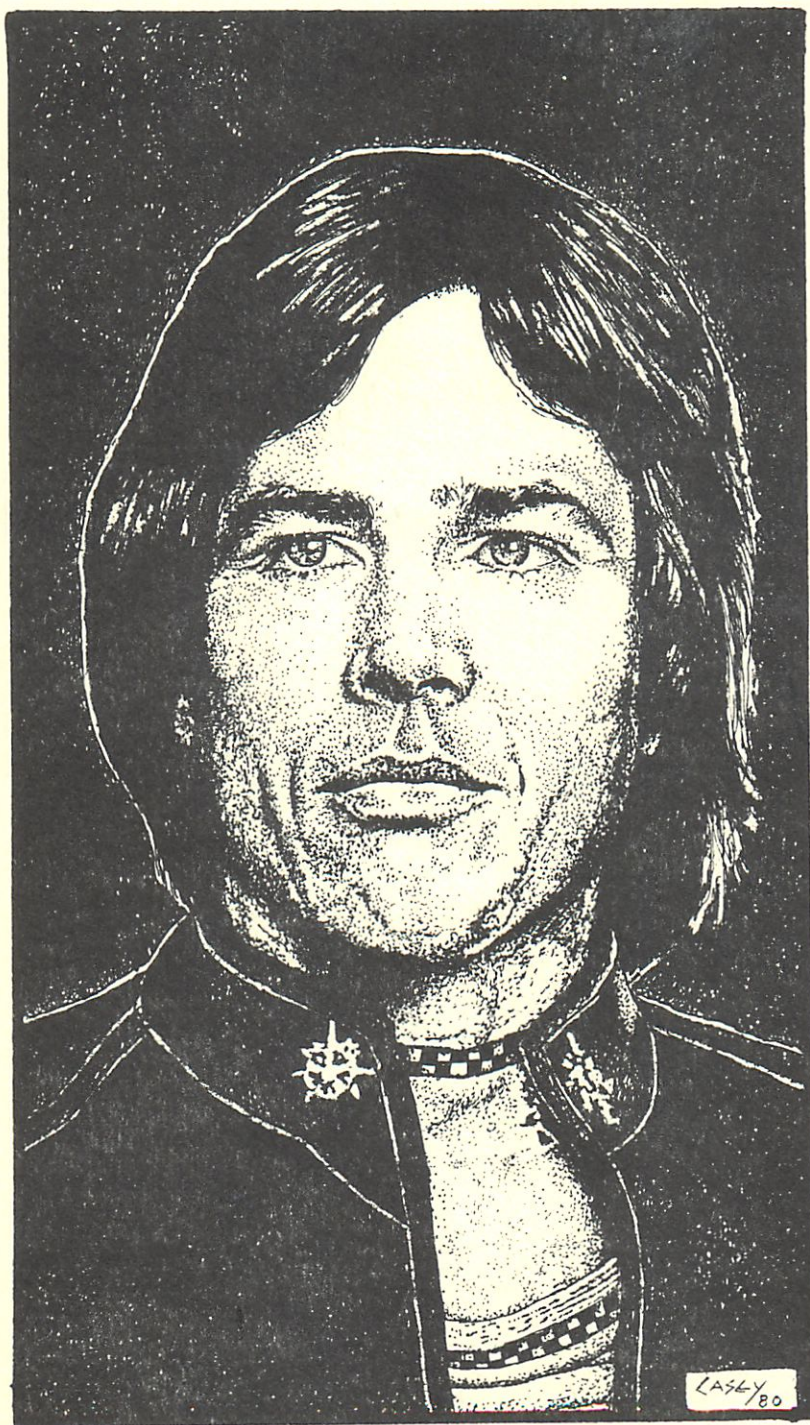


PURPLE & ORANGE?

#6



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"Purple and Orange?" is intended solely for the enjoyment of fans of the ABC-TV series BATTLESTAR GALACTICA and GALACTICA 1980 and is the official publication of Battlestar OSIRIS, an unofficial fan club, c/o The New Fantasy Shop, 5651 West Belmont Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60634.

Submissions and letters of comment are both encouraged and welcomed.

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EPISODE GUIDE

The following is a list of all episodes of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, as of the end of the 1978/79 television season, along with their broadcast dates.

9/17/78	"Battlestar GALACTICA"	1/28/79	"The Man with Nine Lives"
9/24/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part I)	2/18/79	"Murder on the RISING STAR"
10/01/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part II)	2/25/79	"Greetings from Earth"
10/08/78	"The Lost Warrior"	3/11/79	"Baltar's Escape"
10/15/78	"The Long Patrol"	3/18/79	"Experiment in Terra"
10/22/78	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part I)	4/01/79	"Take the CELESTRA"
10/29/78	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part II)	4/08/79	"Fire in Space" - repeat
11/12/78	"The Magnificent Warriors"	4/29/79	"The Hand of God"
11/19/78	"The Young Lords"	6/02/79	"The Living Legend" (Part I) - repeat
11/26/78	"The Living Legend" (Part I)	6/09/79	"The Living Legend" (Part II) - repeat
12/03/78	"The Living Legend" (Part II)	6/16/79	"The Young Lords" - repeat
12/17/78	"Fire in Space"	6/23/79	"The Long Patrol" - repeat
12/24/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part I) - repeat	7/07/79	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part I) - repeat
12/31/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part II) - repeat	7/14/79	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part II) - repeat
1/14/79	"War of the Gods" (Part I)	7/21/79	"War of the Gods" (Part I) - repeat
1/21/79	"War of the Gods" (Part II)	7/28/79	"War of the Gods" (Part II) - repeat
		8/04/79	"The Man with Nine Lives" - repeat

DIANA'S JOURNAL

(Personal entry -- Voice code retrieval only.)

I'd have made this an open record -- the event is certainly common knowledge -- but I'm afraid if poor Arion ever found it, he'd never stop blushing...

But, Lords, it was funny! I've never seen so much chaos and confusion, all over one harmless -- or maybe not so harmless -- animal.

I suppose everyone who's been aboard the OSIRIS since the beginning of her mission knows about the zoo. I doubt there's a person on board, except possibly some of our recently-arrived refugees, who hasn't spent many pleasant centars there. In fact, that's part of its purpose -- a quiet, peaceful place where we can escape, if only briefly, from the daily pressures of our lives.

The zoo was constructed in a large cargo hold. We needed a place to keep the animals we picked up during our mission, and we wanted a place where those animals would feel at home. We weren't collecting oddities; we wanted animals who could be adapted to our worlds. We always took breeding pairs or families, since we were interested in establishing these species in the Colonies. And we were always careful to recreate each creature's home environment, and to insure that no animal would feel like a captive.

Sekmet is our head zookeeper, a man who loves animals and treats each one like a child of his own. The animals, in fact, are cared for better than many children on some of the worlds we've visited...

There are numerous species in the zoo that resemble animals native to the Colonies. One of them is a creature known on its home world as a "dire wolf."

The name is a bit misleading. True, the dire wolf is big, growing to over five feet at the shoulder. It has coarse tricoloured fur -- red, white, and black -- and a huge white ruff, and big slanting golden eyes. The ears are erect, the tail long and bushy. The animal is gentle, friendly, even affectionate toward humans, as well as toward its own kind.

In short, the dire wolf resembles an oversized daggit.

Our experts think the dire wolves will make excellent companions for children, especially where a creature with more intelligence

than a daggit is required. Unfortunately, intelligence is only one requirement in a watchdaggit -- and the dire wolves are just too gentle to function as guards.

But they are loving -- and lovable. We took two mated pairs aboard the OSIRIS. Both females were pregnant, and we now have eight furry dire wolf pups as well...

We picked up the dire wolves only a few sectars before our return to the Colonies -- and that was only a few sectars ago.

In the short time they've been aboard the ship, however, the dire wolves have adapted well to life among humans. In fact, they get along with our personnel so well they've been given virtually free run of the zoo. Which, I suppose, is how it all began...

Last night, Cadet Arion -- our young survivor from the COLUMBIA -- was released from Life Centre, and the Warriors from all three squadrons held a party to celebrate. Nearly everyone not on duty crowded into the Officers' Club.

About the same time the party got under way, someone accidentally left a hatch open in the zoo -- and a very clever, extremely enterprising dire wolf pup got loose. In no time at all, a wild chase began, with two biosurvey techs, then Sekmet, then half a dozen Security personnel all racing after a furry missile.

The chase led practically everywhere aboard the ship -- except possibly the launch tubes and landing bays. When the pup, whom Sekmet named "Flicka," charged onto the bridge, chaos took over. I was talking to the Commander and Layla, our senior communications officer, when the parade entered. Two laps around the command station, and the pup was off again. Christopher, Layla, and I joined the chase. It led, ultimately, to the Officers' Club.

When Flicka -- who is nearly three feet high and weighs more than I do -- dashed into the crowd, people literally went flying. It's hard not to fall when you trip over a hurtling bundle of fur, and it's even harder to stay on your feet when something the size of Flicka runs between your legs. Mugs, bottles, and bodies went everywhere.

Then Flicka encountered Arion. She banged into the back of his knees, and he went down seat first, with his feet in the air.

That's when our dire wolf pup decided she'd had enough running. She skidded to an immediate halt, and before anyone realised what was happening, there was Flicka, straddling Arion and energetically licking his face. Maybe I should say "washing" his face, though, because Flicka's tongue is as big as the rest of her...

Poor Arion! I don't think he'd ever seen -- or even heard of -- the dire wolves before. And suddenly there was this huge canine standing over him... I imagine he was terrified -- but he looked so funny!



Something in Common

by Karen Pauli



"Something in Common"

(By Karen Pauli)

The Commander wanted to talk to Troy and Dillon alone, and he asked another officer, Colonel Boomer, to escort Jamie out. The Colonel was very dignified and military, but with a twinkle in his eyes that suggested he knew the sort of lecture the two younger men were in for — because he'd been there once himself.

As they walked along the corridor, Jamie regarded him thoughtfully. "You know, I find the names of your people quite fascinating. 'Troy' and 'Dillon' are similar to Earth names, but your name is quite unusual. By Earth standards, that is. Is it common among your people?"

Colonel Boomer smiled, as if at some private joke. "No. Actually, it's a nickname I picked up. It stuck so tight I just gave up using my real name altogether. From the day I entered the Academy, it's been my official legal name."

"The Academy?"

"The military academy back on Caprica."

"Caprica. Is that the planet all you people come from?"

"No. It was one of twelve worlds. Caprica was my home, and it's where the Academy was located, though."

"But all these people come from twelve separate worlds?"

The Colonel smiled again. "It's easy to tell you're a newscaster. You sound just like one."

"You have newscasters, too?"

"My best friend married one. Serina was always asking questions, too. She was a well-known media personality on Caprica. In fact, she was doing a broadcast on the peace celebration when the Cylon attack came."

"What happened to her?"

"She was one of the survivors we picked up. We didn't exactly have a need for newscasters, so she became a shuttle pilot. When our fighter pilots were all stricken with an unknown disease, the shuttle pilots were pressed into service. She was killed."

"Oh." Jamie was a little disappointed she couldn't meet the woman.

A crewman hurried up to the Colonel and said something Jamie couldn't hear.

The Colonel turned to her. "If you'll excuse me, there's a matter I have to attend to. If you follow this corridor, you can't get lost."

"Certainly."

The Colonel hurried off, and Jamie was left by herself. She wandered along slowly, until she came to a small room. Looking inside, she saw what appeared to be a computer console of some sort. The sign by the door said DATA BANK ACCESS. That seemed to suggest some sort of information retrieval, like a library. The room was empty, so Jamie went in and sat down in the chair.

She was trying to figure out how to work the console when a crewwoman came in.

"Oh! Excuse me. I didn't know the panel was in use."

Jamie jumped up guiltily. "Oh, that's all right. I was just, uh..."

"Trying to figure out the console? It's the same with all the trainees. They give you an assignment to look up, but forget to tell you these terminals are a bit different from the ones on the training ship. Don't be embarrassed. It took me a while to learn this console, too. Here, let me help. What information were you after?"

It took Jamie only a moment to realise that, in her borrowed uniform, she'd been mistaken for a member of the crew. Maybe she could use this to her advantage. "I was trying to get information on the newswoman Serina, from Caprica."

"You mean the newscast of the destruction of the Colonies?"

"Mostly anything on Serina herself. Especially any newscasts showing her."

The woman typed in an access code, and a display lit up on the screen. She began filling in the information called for. NAME: SERINA. PLANET OF ORIGIN: CAPRICA. DESIGNATION: NEWSCASTER. FLEET CLASSIFICATION:

"Do you remember what position she held in the Fleet?"

"I think she was a pilot."

"What sort of pilot?"

Jamie frantically tried to remember what Colonel Boomer told her. "She was a shuttle pilot, and she became a fighter pilot when all the regular ones got sick."

"So she was probably still classified a shuttle pilot." She typed in the rest of the information. SHUTTLE PILOT. DATA REQUESTED: GENERAL BIOGRAPHY AND ALL VIDEO RECORDINGS. "If I recall correctly, she was one of our early casualties. There won't be much information."

"Anything will help. Thank you so much. Uh, what do I...?"

"That green button marked 'start.'" The woman left, and Jamie sat down at the

console. Tentatively, she pushed "start."

The information on the screen was instantly supplemented by Serina's age, date and place of birth, education, and other basic information. Jamie was interested to learn Serina was WIDOWED, REMARRIED and had ONE CHILD, MALE, NAMED BOXEY.

Jamie read through the information, then, uncertain how to continue, pressed "start" again. The screen played an interview of some political figure. The interviewer, Serina, was very beautiful, with an assured, professional manner. Jamie admired the woman's obvious skill. Then the interview came to an end, and the screen froze.

Jamie pressed "start" yet again; another newscast started. Serina was reporting on some sort of celebration. She was standing in front of a huge bank of flowers spelling out the word "peace." Again, Jamie marvelled at her professional manner.

"Preparations continue through the night here at the Caprica Presidium. We can see at the moment it is somewhat deserted. But with the new dawn, it'll be full of Capricans, coming here, eagerly and joyfully, to usher in a new era, the era of peace. So far, details of the armistice meeting, going on at this very moment on the STAR KOBOL, are not coming in as we had hoped for. It seems that this is due to unusual electrical interferences, which are blocking out all interstellar communications. However, as soon as they are available, we will be showing you the first pictures of something that has been described as the most significant event in history."

Serina broke off as a loud explosion took place somewhere behind her. "Oh, my God! It's a tremendous explosion!" She beckoned to her camera crew. "Are we getting this on the camera?" There were more explosions. "People are running everywhere, running in all different directions. Oh, ladies and gentlemen, this is terrible! They... They're bombing the city..."

Suddenly a spaceship streaked overhead, straffing the crowd. A building exploded. The camera tilted, and the picture dissolved in static. Jamie was instantly reminded of cases where Earth newscasters covering wars and revolutions had been caught in the fighting — and sometimes killed. It must have been hard to comprehend, seeing your whole planet destroyed around you when you were expecting peace.

Jamie's curiosity nudged her, and she pushed "start" once again. The next recording was of a different quality, as if fed directly into the computer instead of broadcast. It showed a room aboard the ship, a room decorated with flowers. A group of people were gathered, and it all looked very formal. Jamie was startled to see Commander Adama without his beard. She saw a man she thought was Colonel Boomer, then realised it was someone else when she saw a much younger-looking Boomer dressed in pilots' brown. Boomer was standing next to a handsome young man dressed in a deep blue uniform like the Commander's.

Music started, and a young woman dressed in a blue uniform entered, followed by a lovely woman in an iridescent gown and veil. It took Jamie a moment to recognise the second woman as Serina. This must be her wedding. A small boy

about six years old entered, wearing a miniature copy of the formal blue uniform -- and a mile-wide grin. Was he Serina's son?

Adama started to speak. Jamie listened carefully, fascinated by this glimpse of another culture. The words were different ("sealed" instead of "married"), but the ceremony -- and certainly the sentiments -- were much the same as at weddings she'd been to. The handsome young man in the blue uniform was named Apollo, and from the way he and Serina gazed at each other, it was obvious they were very much in love.

And the little boy was named Boxey -- Serina's son. He looked very proud of himself, as though he'd engineered the whole match. Jamie wondered what had become of him. He'd be a grown man now, if he was still alive. From what she'd heard, this fleet seemed to have a rather high mortality rate.

The ceremony ended. END OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION. FURTHER REQUEST?

On a hunch, Jamie typed in: BOXEY, SON OF SERINA, GENERAL BIOGRAPHY. She hit "start" and was rewarded by a full screen of information.

The first line read: BOXEY. ADULT NAME TROY. RANK: CAPTAIN. ASSIGNMENT: BLUE SQUADRON. She read it several times to be sure she was seeing it correctly. No, it couldn't be. It must be just coincidence. She read on.

MOTHER: SERINA, NEWSCASTER, CAPRICA. FATHER: INFORMATION LOST. ADOPTED BY APOLLO, CAPTAIN, BLUE SQUADRON, GALACTICA. ADOPTED GRANDSON OF ADAMA, COMMANDER, GALACTICA.

There was more. Boxey was born on Caprica, but seemed to have received most of his education on the Fleet's school ship. Which would put him at about six years old when these people started their journey. Then, when Jamie pressed "start" one more time, the screen displayed an identification picture that was beyond a doubt the Captain Troy she knew. So his mother was a newscaster -- and his grandfather was the Commander of the Fleet! She pushed "start" again.

END OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION. FURTHER REQUEST?

Jamie was about to type in Dillon's name when she heard his voice right behind her. She'd been so intent on the screen, she hadn't heard him come in.

"Jamie! Now what are you doing? How did you learn to work that console?"

Jamie jumped to her feet. "Well, uh, I just, uh..."

"Never mind. We have to get you back to Earth. Come on."

* * * * *

As they approached Earth, Jamie found herself looking at the planet as though through someone else's eyes, wondering what sort of story Serina would have done about that shining blue and white world.

"Spica #3"

A half BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, half STAR WARS fanzine. Available now. It includes such stories as "Silver Squadron: Some Things Are Worse Than Death" -- the next part of our story about the all-girl squadron on the GALACTICA; "Moonlight Feels Right" -- Starbuck was depressed, feeling worthless, when something made it all seem worthwhile again; "A Matter of Pride" -- Han Solo gets involved in something that's almost more than he can handle; "Hide Your Love Away" -- an in-depth look into some of the problems and feelings Leia and Han experienced during THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. Plus editorials, a BSG trivia quiz, ads, LoCs, and much more.

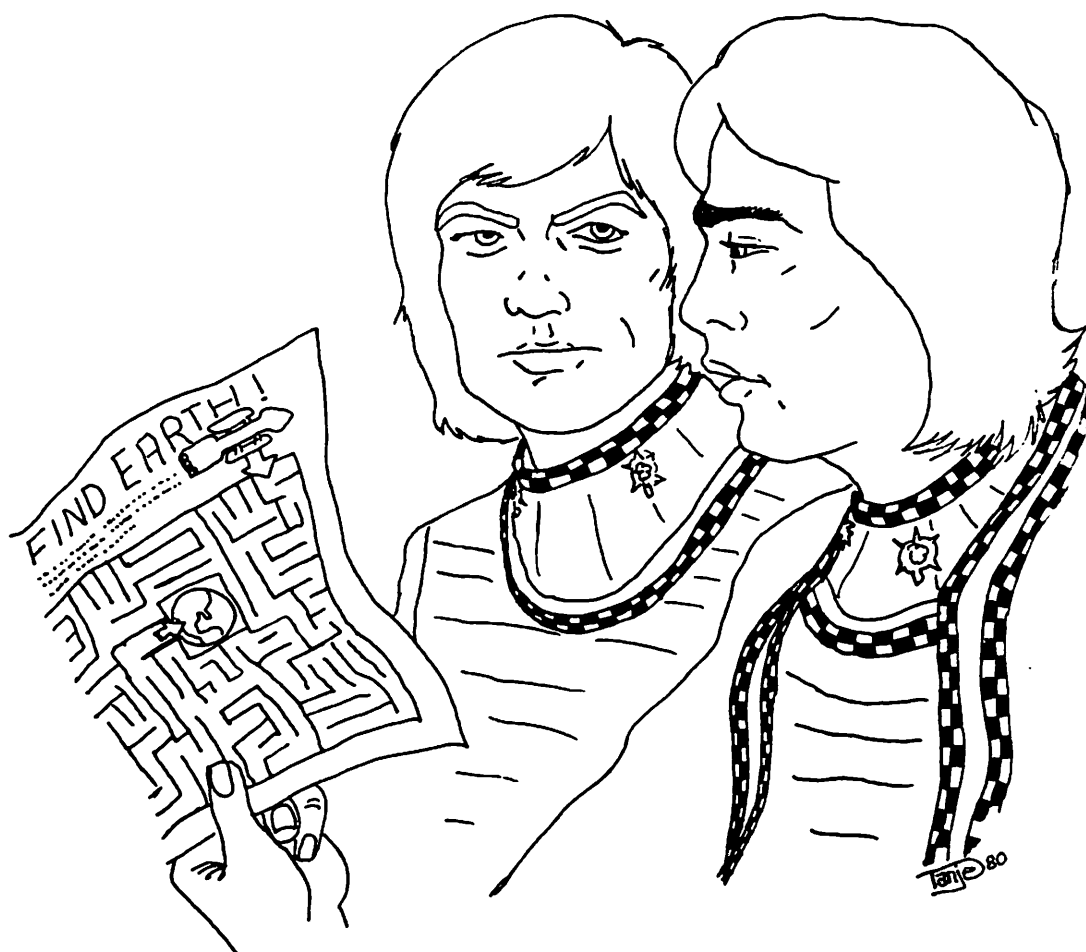
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Somehow, Starbuck, I don't think this will help us.



LYRA'S LOG

(Personal and Confidential)

That young scamp Arion has done it again -- taken off on his own against direct orders. When he gets back, I'm going to give him Hades. And if I have to risk other pilots to go after him, I'm going to see the reprimand becomes official and on the record. I've had quite enough!

* * * * *

Well, Arion made it back somehow, and I didn't have to send anyone after him. I was waiting at a scanner when he touched down, and ordered him to my quarters as soon as he was through decon.

He looked rather sheepish when he came through the hatch, still carrying his helmet. I was standing behind my desk with my back to him, attempting to get my anger under control before I faced him. I watched his reflection in the tylinium over my painting, and when I judged he'd fidgeted enough, I turned around.

I said I was going to give him Hades, and I did. I pounded and pounded at the fact he risked not only himself but everyone aboard when he pulled a crazy stunt. I think toward the end he began to believe me.

The more I talked (I wasn't really screaming...), the more his face changed -- from pride in yet another escapade to displeasure at my anger to realisation I was right, and finally what I was waiting for -- to horror that someone else might have been hurt because of something he'd done. When I saw that glazed shock creep over his face, I dismissed him, hoping he'd take the time to think about what he was feeling at that micron.

Much later that night, my page sounded. The only one who dared seek me out in my quarters in the middle of my sleep period was Diana, so I opened without question. It was my turn for surprise. My caller was Arion.

"Uh, Colonel, could I talk to you for a centon?"

My initial response was, "Not in the middle of my only time to myself, you troublemaker," but I choked that back when the look on his face registered. He really needed to talk, and I told myself I should be flattered he chose me, even if my painting was drying and going to be ruined.

The screen that separates my desk from the rest of my quarters (and my military from my private life) is my pride and joy. I picked it up on one of the first planets we visited. It is carved in precise geometric patterns, in a material black as emp-

ty space, but that glistens like dew. The only one who had ever been behind that screen was Diana. She always laughingly refers to it as the "gates of Hades." She's more right than she knows.

At any rate, my painting was drying on the other side of my screen, and it was calling to me to finish it. On a whim, I told Arion to join me. His eyes widened as he took in my furnishings; they are anything but military. They certainly do not look like the Bachelor Officers' Quarters. Pale blue carpets cover the decks. My paintings cover the bulkheads. Throws in many shades of blue cover the functional furniture. An unused bunk is piled deep in cushions; it has become my sofa. I don't think my dressing gown resembled a battle suit, either.

After I handed Arion some ambrosia, I started to work on my painting, figuring he'd get around to whatever was bothering him sooner or later. When he still hadn't spoken some time later, I looked up. I had been bending over my painting, and he had been staring down the front of my gown. I didn't laugh. I just straightened, worked on my painting to where I could stop, set it aside, and asked again what he wanted.

He shook himself and had to refocus his eyes, as if coming back from another reality. I believe he forgot why he needed to talk to someone. For just a micron, he looked so lost and helpless he touched a responsive chord in me. I went to sit next to him on the sofa.

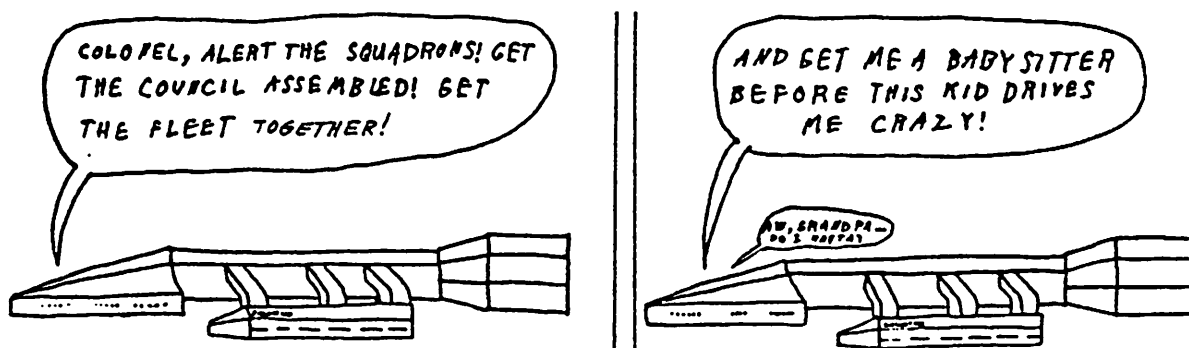
Now, I haven't been alone with a man in one Hades of a long time. For all that he's green, Arion is still a man. I put my hand on his knee, asked what was troubling him, then promptly forgot about it as the officer switched off and the woman switched on. I found my hand running up his leg. Then my other hand started turning curls in his hair and making circles behind his ear.

After he finished being terrified and started to enjoy himself, Arion handled himself remarkably well. He learns quickly.

It was several centars before he left my quarters. When Arion left, he was considerably less green than when he entered. He even handled bumping into Diana on his way out with aplomb.

I do believe there's hope for him.

Maybe I can teach him a few of Starbuck's tricks...



BATTLESTAR OSIRIS

INTERSHIP MEMO

TO: Major Fafnir, Senior Supply Officer

FROM: Lieutenant Freya, Orange Squadron/Sentiologist, Second Class

SUBJECT: Byzelian Bast (Mine)

MESSAGE: As you know, my duties as a sentiologist include the study of ancient settlements on alien worlds. Domestic animals are often employed to assist in the location and excavation of artifacts, and, like many sentiologists, I prefer basts to the more clumsy daggits. I consider a good bast an essential tool for my work.

My long-time bast, Elidor, was killed in a cave-in at the Srolt Site on Byzel, a planet we surveyed shortly before returning to what was left of the Colonies. Elidor's death was a great personal loss for me, but you assured me his professional place could be filled by a native bastling your supply clerks found on Byzel. Clem was too young for excavation work at that time, but you insisted she would soon develop into a fine sentiological bast.

Well, Fafnir, Clem has been with me almost a full yahren now. Not only is she flighty, undisciplined, noisy, and possibly -- no, probably -- psychotic; she is in heat. The med tech I consulted to rectify this last situation tells me a Byzelian bast's internal physiology bears no resemblance to that of its Caprican namesake. It may take several yahrens for Life Sciences to figure out just how to fix Clem.

Meanwhile, I've been volunteering for long-range Viper patrols. Unfortunately, Clem usually finds out in advance and insists I take her along. Have you ever spent time in a Viper cockpit with an alien bast in heat? It is not a pleasant experience, Fafnir, and I blame you.

I have three urgent requests for the immediate future:

1. Don't ever pull something like this again.
2. Find me a real Caprican bast.
3. Ask around, and see if anyone picked up a male bastling on Byzel.

Daughter of the Colonies



by Nan Burridge

"Daughter of the Colonies"

(By Nan Burridge)

Weatherwise, it was a beautiful day. Crisp sunlight and brisk wind played across the charred, tumbled ruins that extended almost to the visible horizon. No one who'd seen the place standing would be likely to credit this as once having been the busiest base in the Colonies, headquarters and shipyard of the Colonial Fleet on Caprica. To the silent woman on the hill, the sunlight was highly inappropriate. Rather, the rubble seemed to cry out mournfully for the cover of night.

Trav didn't know how long ago the Cylon attack had been. She no longer measured time in ordered sequences of days. She did know that in the bright light the wreckage looked horribly fresh. Wind and rain hadn't been able to cleanse the air of the stench of death and burning, although Trav was largely unaware of it by then. During the red night of the treacherous attack and the long days of dodging Cylon patrols that had followed -- then, she'd smelled the air. Trav carried memories she didn't want but couldn't be rid of. The things she'd witnessed, the aid she'd been unable to give -- these would form her nightmares for the rest of her life. Survival had been largely a matter of luck -- and a quick laser. She'd been blessed with both.

"Trav! Lieutenant Trav! We're ready for testing. Get in here!"

The angry voice of Captain Rarig rang through the makeshift hangar behind her. He was a good but impatient officer, the driving force behind their oddly assorted band of some fifteen survivors. Trav left the brooding ruins to the sun and trotted back to the ship.

Rarig, iron-grey hair falling across dark eyes, leaned heavily on his cane and shot darting glances around the hangar. His pilot was missing again. When would she remember his orders to stay inside during the day? With a small sigh, he felt his anger dissolve into sympathy again. Somewhere in those mountains of rubble was Trav's entire family, unfound and never formally buried. He understood her desire to deal justly with her dead. But there were too many dead, too few living, and no time at all to attend to the civilised amenities. So far, they'd managed to hide their activities from the Cylons -- but that kind of luck wouldn't hold forever. They had to get the old supply ship repaired and away before the Cylons found them.

Rarig looked up quickly as Lieutenant Trav skidded to a halt in front of him. As usual, her impassive face and quiet hazel eyes said nothing, but the direction she came from told him he'd been right about her ruin-watching. Well, this wasn't the time to discuss it.

"Get aboard, Lieutenant. Engineer Cassandra thinks she has those thrust chambers tight enough for normal space speeds. I've got Cadet Tahleen monitoring Cylon patrol activity with the passive-study board right now. We'll switch to long-range scanner as soon as you and Cass turn the engines on." He stopped

her as she moved to board.

"When you begin the test, I want you to hold her for five centons instead of the ten we planned. There's been some Cylon activity in the area, and there's no point in announcing ourselves just yet. Pay very close attention to the engine pattern; five centons isn't much time for a full appraisal."

"Yes, sir." Trav nodded. "If they don't explode in five centons, they'll probably let us clear the atmosphere before they go up."

Rarig smiled tightly as Trav scrambled aboard the antique ship. She had a very dry sense of humour.

Humour, however, was the last thing on Trav's mind. "Engines," the Captain had called them. What a laugh! What a bad joke! Trav, master pilot, rated to fly anything from a shuttle to a battle cruiser, knew the difference between "engine" and "museum piece." What they had was a relic of the latter class -- and one that hadn't been in good shape when it was donated to the Caprican Deep Space Museum. Time and no real maintenance had done the old ship few favours. Still, they'd been lucky beyond belief to find the QUARTERMASTER intact. One made do if there were no other choices.

Trav was convinced the group's real problem wasn't the lack of equipment -- bad as that was -- but the critical lack of trained personnel. Cassandra was the only engineer they had. True, she was rated a Chief of Engineering, but there were no technicians of any class to help her. Rarig had been in the General Accounting Office, for the Lords' sake! The group had five cadets (one of them an Academy drop-out), three Security men, two cooks, a med tech, and Lieutenant Merlay, who'd taught Alien Psychology at the Academy. It was a strange assortment for making a decommissioned ship spaceworthy again. It was a determined one, though. All agreed it was better to blow up in mid-sky than to wait for the Cylons to hunt them down.

Besides, it was still remotely possible the GALACTICA hadn't yet left the secret rendezvous. That was the real source of their hope, of Rarig's drive. Privately, Trav was sure the GALACTICA was already long gone. But hope -- hope the battlestar's survival generated -- kept them from going mad or suicidally throwing themselves at some Cylon patrol. The mad and the suicidal only died -- and the dead, Trav noted coldly, took no revenge.

She climbed onto what passed for the ship's bridge and ducked past dangling power cables. As she slid into the pilot's chair, Trav gave her nervous co-pilot, an ex-student shuttle pilot named Mehl, a reassuring smile. He needed it. Before she could offer the youngster any further reassurance, however, Cassandra's voice spoke sharply over the ship's intercom.

"Engineering to Pilot. Ready for test."

"Pilot to Engineering," Trav replied. "Everything's ready. All lights green. Commence power input at your discretion."

Eyes locked onto the board in front of her, Trav gave her complete attention to the test run. The board lit slowly, one dial at a time, as Cassandra cautiously fed power. Part of Trav listened to Mehl chanting numbers as the pow-

er level rose steadily; the rest concentrated on pushing a button here, a lever there. The old ship didn't have much in the way of computer control; Trav had it all to herself.

Finally, they reached lift power. Long, thin hands moved rapidly across the controls, increasing thrust from the third turbo, throttling back the second, then changing again. The QUARTERMASTER began to lift, rocking the hangar. Trav's eyes never left the panel as she balanced her ship on the edge of flight. The centons slid slowly by as she felt for any quirks in the rejuvenated engines. At the five-centon mark, she throttled back, settled the ship, shut down the board, and felt a faint stir of real hope. Granted, this had been only a test -- and a very short one, too -- but those engines held beautifully. A wide smile crossed her face, making her look about half her twenty-eight yahrens, as she thumped the sweat-drenched Mehl soundly on the back and whooped into the intercom.

"Great job, Cass! She handled just fine, not a single flutter. This old bird's gonna fly again yet!"

Cassandra's voice held a similar note of jubilation. "You bet she will! Remember, this is Cass and company. Engines built from junk, our speciality!"

"A good run. Thank you both." It was Rarig. "Now let's see about getting hyperspace capability."

* * * * *

It was long past nightfall when Trav and Cassandra stumbled from the QUARTERMASTER and headed for bed. While Trav was no engineer, everything she'd learned as an engineer's extra pair of hands left her with a deep foreboding this evening. They'd done so well with the sublight engines. Perhaps that was what lay behind Cass's open worry about the hyperspace capabilities. But Trav doubted it. The critical difference in a Marron-drive ship between hyperspace and no hyperspace was the amount of tylum pressure the central chamber could take. Tonight, there was no shine in Cassandra's dark eyes, no life in her voice. Even her tumbling mass of dark curls looked flat. To Trav, it added up to an irreparable chamber. And if that was the case, taking off in the antique ship would be just like inviting the Cylons for target practice.

Too disturbed to sleep, Trav guided the half-awake engineer to her bunk, then slipped out into the night. She was careful to keep within the electronic alert system Captain Rarig had set up to give them warning of Cylon patrols -- and the rare, but increasingly vicious, bands of people who still wandered Caprica's ruined surface. Ahead of her, the tumbled wreckage that had been Married Enlisted Quarters was a merciful blur in the darkness. Trav stared into the night, not needing daylight to make out the harsh details of fallen stone, twisted metal, and shattered glass.

During the first section or so, before she'd stumbled onto Rarig and his band, her attention had alternated between searching for a ship heading off-world and trying to reach the family apartments so deeply buried in the rubble. Everyone had been there -- all four grandparents, her mother and father, her twin brother. All gathered to celebrate the dual events of the Peace and Trav and Meric's birthday. If that last-centon order to fly some extra-special am-

broisia to Caprica City hadn't come in just before Trav was to have gone off duty, she'd have been there, too, under the rubble with everyone who mattered. Even after Rarig persuaded her to join his efforts, she'd continued trying to reach her family. Finally, she admitted the utter hopelessness of the effort. Now, she simply stared across the charred heaps, rather than trying to move them singlehanded.

"It won't help them to sit up all night."

The unexpected voice brought Trav around sharply. In the dim starlight, Lieutenant Merlay's silver hair was a glittering halo.

"You scared me," Trav said. "What are you doing up following me?"

"You need someone to talk to. I'm volunteering."

"How would you know that?" Trav sounded indifferent.

Merlay laughed quietly and shook her head. "I taught psychology, remember?"

"Alien psychology, as I recall."

"Yes." Merlay nodded. "But someone as disturbed as you is alien to the so-called norm. Trav, tell me about it. Oh, I know the facts, but you need to say them out loud, to hear yourself, to let go."

Trav turned back to the night. She had no intention of telling this noisy daggit anything. Maybe if she ignored her...

Merlay walked softly to the other woman's side and simply stood beside her in silence. Trav's pain was a scream in her sensitive mind. The girl would destroy herself soon if she didn't find an outlet for it. Patiently, the psychologist prepared to wait her out.

Almost a centar later, Trav turned savagely. "Go away! I don't need you, your silence, or your help." The words came out in a low snarl.

Undisturbed, Merlay replied, "Yes, you do."

"I do not!" the pilot shouted.

"Shut up!" Merlay snapped back. "Before you have every Cylon in the Colonies here."

Amazed at her own recklessness, Trav obeyed. Merlay let her think about the outburst, which had come against all instinct, all reason. Silence being the best method of staying alive, people had very quickly given up yelling at one another. The break in her own self-discipline shook the young pilot.

Finally, Trav took a deep breath and said quietly, "Go away."

"Talk to me," Merlay answered.

"No. Go away."

"Trav, I'm not leaving. Too much depends on you. I don't think it takes much imagining to realise what would happen if Mehl had to lift the QUARTERMASTER alone. Give it a thought, because if you don't start thinking beyond your losses, you'll break under the guilt you've put on yourself. Then the cadet becomes our only pilot."

"What guilt? That's a load of felgercarb," Trav replied sullenly.

Merlay said nothing.

"I said, 'what guilt?'" Trav's voice sharpened.

Again, Merlay had nothing to say.

"What guilt?" The voice was ragged.

Merlay watched the night.

"What...? What...?" Suddenly, Trav was crying -- not the noisy tears of a child, but the almost silent sobs of an adult who has too long refused to cry at all.

It was less than a centar to dawn, Merlay noted. Trav had stopped crying some time before, but the girl still hadn't said anything. It wasn't wise to push, but there just wasn't any time to wait. "Trav, will you talk to me now?"

With a small sigh, the other replied, "Where do you want me to start?"

"With yourself. Who is Trav? Where is she from? Things like that."

"Who is Trav, eh? Well, she's twenty-eight, a master pilot and lieutenant in the Colonial Fleet, rated to fly everything from shuttles to battle cruisers, and only about a sectar away from gaining a battlestar rating as well. At least, I was." Trav looked at Merlay; the older woman was listening with quiet interest.

"I'm one of twins, born aboard the PACIFICA. I gather the Commander wasn't happy about a failure in the contraceptive program, because we were promptly transferred to Taura. I've lived on every major base in the Colonies, and a good number of the minor ones. When I came of age, I enlisted."

"Why not the Tauran Academy? Since that would have been your native planet of record, they'd have accepted you."

"I'd seen too many of my friends go into the various Academies and come out feeling they were somehow better than everyone else. I didn't need that. Besides, I'm not registered as Tauran. I fall inside the seven-generation limit on all twelve worlds." Trav waved her hand proudly at the night sky. "I'm native-born everywhere."

Merlay's silver eyebrows lifted with interest. Space-born children were unusual enough. She'd never before heard of anyone who had native status on more than five of the twelve worlds. It explained a great deal about Trav. With the Fleet for her only home and no single planet to claim her, it wasn't

surprising she'd become so dependent on her own family for a sense of personal identity. No wonder she'd been projecting such a death wish. She had no roots left. Too bad she hadn't married; it would've given her a second anchor.

Dawn was well past before Trav and Merlay finished. It was the psychologist who finally brought the talk to an end and sent the other woman to meet Cass in the engine room. As Trav disappeared, Captain Rarig stepped out of a side door.

"What do you think, Lieutenant?"

"She should make it now," Merlay answered with a small shake of her head. "I'm surprised the pressure inside her didn't bring this on earlier. She really believed she had no right to live if everyone else was dead."

"You cured that, I trust."

"Hardly, Captain. But she's thinking along healthier lines -- living to continue past traditions, rather than dying in some spectacular effort of revenge and atonement. As I said, she'll make it. Trav's got a good mind. All I had to do was let her talk it out. She'll find her own reasons for living."

"And what about Merlay? Will she make it?"

Smoky-violet eyes looked sideways at the Captain, and Merlay smiled, a small, secretive smile. "Merlay has her own reasons for living, thank you. If you must worry, worry about Mehl and his insecurities."

"So?"

The quiet woman moved toward the hangar door, then paused. "Captain, I'm not Aya, and I won't replace her."

Rarig stared after Merlay as she vanished into the hangar. Of course she wasn't Aya. His wife was dead. And who asked her to take Aya's place, anyway? Slowly, Rarig realised that was just what he had asked. How had she known?

Inside, Merlay waited until the Captain calmed. When she could no longer detect any disturbance, she turned away and started walking. Rarig was a good man, but old enough to be her father. Any husband she chose wasn't likely to be so old. A quick glance at the time brought her up to a trot. Sergeant Redon liked his scavenger patrol to leave on time. With a sudden yawn, Merlay wondered if she'd be able to keep up with the Security man.

Trav was yawning, too, and her eyes were heavy. Twice this morning, she'd nearly fallen asleep leaning against the thrust chamber shielding. Irritated, she wondered why she'd stayed up. Then bits and pieces from the talk with Merlay floated into her mind, and she knew why.

A quick glance showed Cassandra busy with a delicate circuit, so Trav sat down to do the thinking Merlay recommended. First off, her family was dead; everyone but herself was under mounds of broken stone. She couldn't help them by

joining them. She couldn't help them at all, not in any way. So that was settled. Now, what could she do to make them, wherever they were, proud that at least one lived on?

Plans and visions danced in Trav's mind. Most of them were grandiose forms of suicide, taking half the Cylon Empire with her. But small, quiet, and very sure, another idea slipped in among the grand, fiery explosions of her imagination. It embraced vengeance strongly, but it also saw advantages to extending life as long as possible, in order to destroy as many Cylons as possible. And somewhere in the slowly tumbling confusion of images, a tall young man and an infant appeared.

Behind the screen her hair provided, Cassandra watched her friend gradually settle against the wall. When the small power driver slid from Trav's hands to bump on the floor, Cass put her work aside, swept the blanket she'd been sitting on off the floor, and covered the sleeping woman. Just as quietly, the engineer went back to her soldering. She didn't need Trav's help for this stage. Indeed, unless this trick worked, she wouldn't need anyone's help. She'd need a totally new thrust chamber.

Centars later, Trav jerked awake as an incredible string of curses exploded from Cass. Not fully aware of where she was, Trav threw the blanket back and tried to jump to her feet. Her head cracked solidly into the chamber shielding she'd been sleeping against.

"Frak!" She stumbled, then caught her balance. "What's wrong, Cass? What're you yelling at?"

"I just fried this entire board. Five centars' work, shot to Hades."

Trav peered over Cassandra's shoulder at the offending circuitry. "Hey! That's the main drive relay system. We can't light a candle with those engines now."

"I can patch around it for sublight speeds, but that just blew all hope of light speed. Until -- and unless -- we can find a replacement." With a small groan, the engineer climbed stiffly to her feet. "You wanna help me look in spare parts?"

"For Sagan's sake, you know there isn't anything useful in there."

"I know, but we gotta look somewhere."

Trav was reaching for the box of odd boards and extraneous components when an idea hit her. She turned back to Cassandra. "Cass, do you remember telling me about a system that could cross the sublight controls to the hyperspace drive? And do you remember telling me the chances of burning out the engines totally was something like 99 out of 100? Do you remember any of that?"

Cassandra turned dark eyes to meet Trav's hazel ones. "Yes, I remember. Now, you tell me what our chances are if we have to leave with nothing but sublight to draw on."

"Point taken." Trav held out the box. The engineer took it and began prowl-

ing through its contents.

"I don't believe it."

"We got lucky?" Trav asked.

"We got lucky." Cassandra held two boards in one small hand. "I can modify them both."

"Let's not fry these, huh?"

Cass just laughed.

They managed not to burn out the replacements, but the trick didn't work. Neither did any of the other things Cassandra tried. The days became a blur of tangled circuitry being put together and pulled apart. No amount of brazing on seams, or even a complete overhaul of the chamber interior, brought up the critical tolerances. A badly-worried Captain Rarig had scavenger parties out daily. While they came back with a lot of very useful material, and once with a frightened ex-cadet, a girl named Naradecici, a new thrust chamber was never on the salvage list.

The lack was making everyone nervous. It was pretty clear the chamber they had simply couldn't be repaired. At least, not with the equipment they had. Cassandra gave up altogether. She and Trav moved out of the engine room to finish repairs on the ship's electrical system.

In other ways, the ship's progress was brighter. By section's end, they had the QUARTERMASTER and all of her piping helium- and solium-tight. The scavenger teams discovered an almost undamaged warehouse filled with the standard emergency rations used throughout the Colonies. A careful check showed a significant amount of the food had escaped pluton poisoning. Rarig pulled everyone off other jobs to get as much stowed aboard as the ship could hold. They had a tight, well-stocked vessel -- an interplanetary vessel. That still left no way to reach the safety of the stars if the GALACTICA had indeed moved on with whomever had been able to reach her in time.

It was shortly past dawn a few days later when Cassandra decided to go back to work on the engines. Trav was passing a wrench to the engineer when the ship's alarms went off. Before they could do more than jerk upright like puppets, Captain Rarig was on the intercom.

"Attention, all personnel. We've scanned a Cylon base star beyond the outer planets. It appears to be engaged in a battle. All personnel, report to your flight stations. We may have to leave quickly."

Eyes met with a bright flare of hope as Cassandra snapped excitedly, "Hurry, Trav! Let's get this cover back on. Thank the Lords it's so early we don't have anything critical open yet!"

"Or any people away from base," the pilot answered, lifting the shield back into place as Cassandra spun the nuts back on their bolts. It took less than three centons to put the engine room back in order. Cass was throwing power relays to begin the startup sequence even as Trav sprinted for the bridge and

her place at the helm.

Mehl and Captain Rarig were already there. A quick glance at the scanners showed Merlay at Tahleen's normal post. Rarig caught Trav's look of surprise and explained, "Tahleen is outside at the long-range scanner. We'll get a better picture."

Trav nodded and slid into her seat, noting that this time the entire board was green; Cassandra had them ready to lift. Everyone looked up as Sergeant Redon popped onto the bridge to tell them all personnel except Tahleen were aboard, and they'd pulled the roof off the hangar. The road was clear for a fast take-off.

Centons became centars, and still no action. Then Merlay made a small noise of surprise. "I could swear the Cylons..."

"The Cylons are retreating!" Tahleen came dashing onto the bridge. "They're pulling back fast, and the only thing I know of with enough firepower to drive out a base star is a battlestar! The GALACTICA must be back, looking for last-micron stragglers!"

As Tahleen ran for her board, Merlay slid from her seat and moved to her own station at the communications console. More centons crawled by.

"It is a battlestar! I'm getting a battlestar!" Tahleen shouted. "It's got to be! There's nothing else that big!"

Captain Rarig waited no longer. Battlestar or not, GALACTICA or not, if they could reach her, they could transfer to her. Then their inability to bring the QUARTERMASTER's engines up to light speed wouldn't matter. "Lift ship," he ordered.

Trav's attention snapped back to her board. She hit the drive relay, and Mehl began to chant numbers as thrust built rapidly in the already-hot chambers. With a small jerk, the engines fired, and they slowly began to rise. Gathering speed, the old ship arrowed up from dead Caprica. As they cleared the atmosphere, Trav brought them around on an intercept course for the huge vessel Tahleen insisted had to be the GALACTICA.

Throughout the lift and the steady acceleration away from the planet, the engines behaved beautifully. They were almost three-quarters up to light speed before there was any trouble. At that speed, the engines began to flutter, almost to stall out. Trav cut the acceleration back at once, and they immediately smoothed out. She slowly built back the lost speed. Again, the engines fluttered at three-fourths light speed. This time, Trav pulled the acceleration off slowly until the engine stumble was gone, then held that speed.

The quality of Cassandra's work showed. For makeshift repairs... Well, they hadn't even hoped to hold half light speed. Trav revelled in the smooth response the old ship displayed. She'd handled battle cruisers that weren't half as good.

At the rate they were closing, they'd reach the other ship in just a few centars. The nearer they got, the plainer it became that this was indeed a Co-

lonial battlestar. A mood of almost hysterical relief swept the QUARTERMASTER. No one was surprised when Tahleen reported they were being approached by Vipers. After meeting a Cylon base star, the battlestar was naturally wary. Still, the Vipers' equipment would undoubtedly show their pilots a human, not a Cylon, crew.

Rarig was considering calling the fast-approaching Vipers when...

"Flight Commander Lyra to sublight vessel. Identify."

Merlay broadcast the ensuing exchange all over the ship.

"This is the QUARTERMASTER, with sixteen survivors of the Destruction aboard. Are we glad to see you!" Rarig answered.

"What is the condition of your ship and personnel? Can you make hyperspace?"

"Negative. We've been trying to get the engines up, but can't. Aside from that, we're tight and spaceworthy. We've also managed to stow a good supply of emergency rations and are completely equipped. However, I do request we be permitted to transfer to the GALACTICA, since we cannot outrun the Cylons."

There were several microns of silence, then Lyra's voice came again. "We aren't from the GALACTICA. The battlestar behind us is the OSIRIS."

OSIRIS? Battlestar OSIRIS? What battlestar OSIRIS?

The five on the bridge looked at one another in confusion. Trav was the first to remember. "Captain, that's the deep space exploration mission! They've been out, oh, I forget how many yahrens."

"Four," Merlay put in.

Trav continued, the shock growing in her voice. "Lords of Kobol! Can you imagine coming home, expecting friends and family, and finding this? They won't -- can't -- have any idea what's been going on." The thought was appalling.

"This is Captain Rarig. Do you people... I mean, has anyone told you about the Colonies?"

"We have the basic facts, Captain. You're not the first we've encountered. Cadet Arion was most informative."

Hooray for Cadet Arion, whoever he was. The stilted formality in the Viper pilot's manner indicated the basic facts hadn't gone down too well. It was understandable.

Rarig took a deep breath. "We are requesting permission to transfer our personnel to the OSIRIS. We cannot make hyperspace. We can't outrun the Cylons in normal space. And we don't have a home to go back to."

The silence lasted several centons this time. All the while, Trav kept the QUARTERMASTER pointed at the battlestar, steadily closing the distance. The

Viper squadron took up an escort formation around them.

"Captain, Commander Christopher will be pleased to take you and your crew aboard." It was Colonel Lyra again. "Might we expect other ships running out to meet us?"

A searingly clear picture of the ruins of Caprica flashed through Trav's mind, was mirrored on Mehl's face. Something very like it must have been in the Captain's head, too. "I don't think so. We scavenged this ship from the Deep Space Museum. As far as I know, everything that could fly took off to rendezvous with the GALACTICA within a section of the Cylon attack. There may be others..." His voice trailed off.

Trav shook her head. The few people they'd seen in the last two sections, with the sole exception of Naradecici, had been animals in human form, incapable of arranging their own rescue. The OSIRIS was unlikely to find anyone else.

* * * * *

Trav stood in the landing bay of the battlestar, looking out at the rapidly receding shape of the QUARTERMASTER. The efficient crew of the OSIRIS had stripped the old vessel in short order. With a slight start, Trav realised the last link to the Colonies was being left behind. Her eyes misted, even though she knew full well the antique they'd worked so hard on couldn't possibly keep up with the battlestar.

Behind her, Trav could hear Colonel Lyra and a red-haired captain going through background checks on Merlay and Cassandra. They did that with each of the survivors, trying to determine how best to integrate them into the OSIRIS crew. It had probably been a relief to Colonel Lyra and the as-yet unseen Commander Christopher that all of them were Warriors. (Well, almost all of them...) No Warrior lacked skills a battlestar could use, while a hodgepodge of civilians... Trav left the thought with a small shudder, trying to imagine how the GALACTICA was coping.

"And you are...?"

The voice behind her brought Trav around quickly, the QUARTERMASTER forgotten. It was the captain with the red hair, and rather striking green eyes, looking doubtfully at her.

"Lieutenant Trav, Captain. Rated master pilot, capital ships. Mixed planet ancestry, no home world." It was a familiar formula, somehow steadying to recite in this unusual situation.

The other woman raised an eyebrow. "You can fly a Viper, I assume."

"Fly one, yes. Almost anyone can fly one." Trav waved a hand dismissively. "Fight in one... I don't know. I've never tried ship-to-ship combat in a Viper, only in larger ships."

The captain frowned. She probably resented the crack about anyone being able to fly a Viper. But it wasn't all that difficult to take off or land one. Fighter pilots weren't chosen just because they could put a ship down in one

piece. It was the instincts and reactions in combat that counted, that extra something in a Warrior's skill that enabled him, or her, to get maximum performance out of the machine. Trav could fly anything in the Fleet — but she wasn't about to claim fighter pilot status without the combat experience to justify it.

"You said you could fly a Viper, Lieutenant," Colonel Lyra said. "Have you ever had any combat simulation courses?"

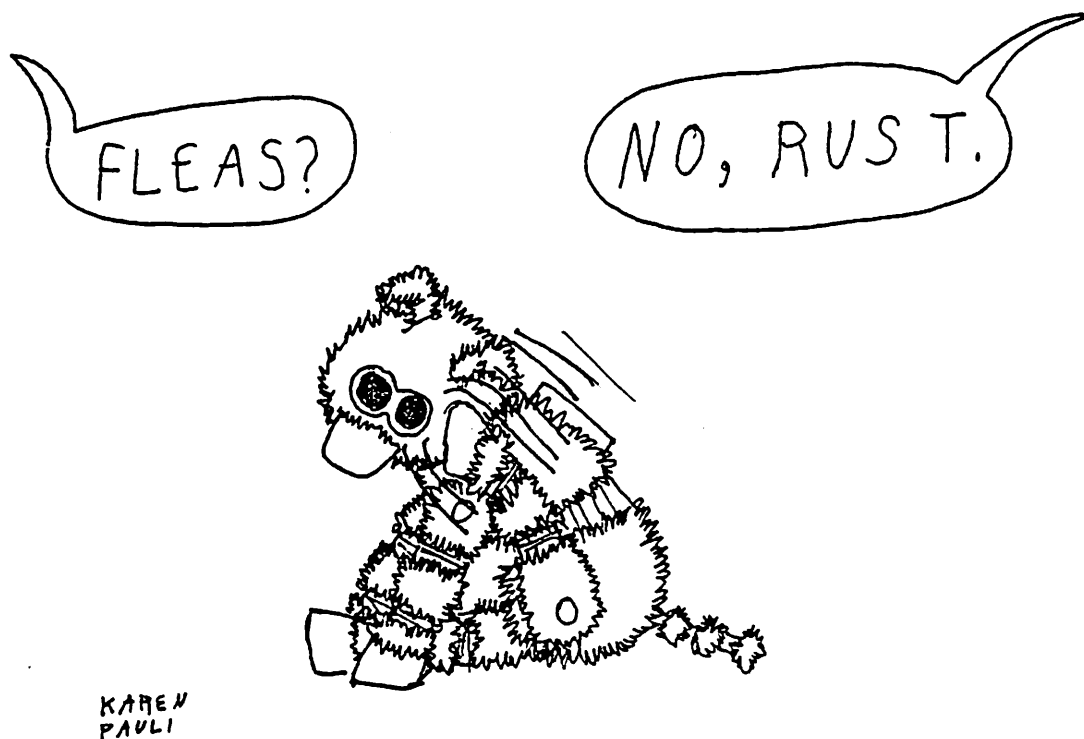
"Yes, Colonel. Passed them, too, but I wasn't outstanding. My flight instructor told me my reactions were too attuned to the slower times of the bigger ships."

"Interesting. We'll put you in Purple Squadron; they're short-handed now. Captain Diana is squadron commander. Tell me, what's this about no home planet?"

Trav went patiently through her birth and background. Captain Diana didn't seem overly impressed, but Lyra looked interested. Satisfied at last, the Colonel ordered Trav to visit Life Centre for a checkup before reporting to the ready room.

With long, quick strides, Trav started across the landing bay. About halfway down the bay, she slowed, stopped, and took a long, deliberate look around. It had dawned on her that this battlestar would have to be her world from now on. It behooved her to become familiar with it.

Then she shrugged. The battlestar wouldn't go away. First Life Centre, then the ready room — and the future, with its bright, grim promise of vengeance, beckoned. Trav, late of the Twelve Worlds, turned down the corridor of the OSIRIS and headed toward her future.



ARION'S JOURNAL

(Personal entry -- Voice coded.)

I'm recording all this because I don't know what else to do. I need to talk it out, and a computer can't embarrass me or make comments I don't want to hear. I've never been able to keep a diary, and I've never been able to keep up with letters, but this is really neither. I can say what I feel, then look at it later. Maybe I'll just laugh. But then again, when I'm not so close to the things I've said, maybe I can come up with some answers. I'm stealing this idea from Lyra.

Lyra? Lords!

What better reason to start a -- diary? -- than the Colonel? Hers was the first face I remember seeing after I escaped the Cylons. When I was trapped in the OSIRIS battle, she was there. She got that Cylon off my tail, then talked me on board. When I crashed in the landing bay, she was there, staying out of the fight to make sure I was okay. When I woke up in Life Centre, she was there. I guess she was kind of like the perfect foster mom.

Or so I thought.

Last night, something happened. It started when I went out on another one of my -- as Lyra calls them -- "escapades." I hate Cylons. I don't think anyone else in the universe can hate them more than I do. They may think they do, but they don't. Well, I took off in my Viper, against orders, to look for some Cylons. I get that way now and then. I feel the only way I can continue living is to "kill" a Cylon. I got one, but that wasn't all.

When I got back, Ly... uh, the Colonel called me to her quarters. I was feeling very good about the whole thing, but the Colonel was furious. She went on and on until I couldn't stand it any more. It really hurt, really ruined my mood.

Well, I left simply hating her. Imagine, this was the person I thought of as a new mom! She had no right to treat me like that! I would never have anything to do with her again.

That night, I had a dream. I was back at the peace conference. For the hundredth time, I saw the ATLANTIA destroyed. And the COLUMBIA. And Sarpedon...

Then I was on deep probe. And I led hundreds of Cylons to the OSIRIS. They destroyed her. I was the only survivor. It was my fault. I could hear Asmodeus laughing.

Then I woke up. I think I was crying. I felt so alone in the universe. I didn't know what to do.

So I went to the Colonel. It was late, and she looked really mad. But she let me in. She took me behind a shiny, carved black screen, gave me a glass of ambrosia, and told me to talk.

The room was incredible. I've never seen quarters like it on a battlestar before. She was beautiful, too. I mean, those tight flight suits are one thing, but that dressing gown was something different. She was painting, and bending over, and, well, I could see right down...

Then she moved, and a few centons later she sat down next to me and told me to talk again. I couldn't. I mean, it was all I could do to keep from crying. I kept seeing the OSIRIS blowing up. And the Colonel's dead body...

And then she was touching me, holding me, kissing me. She scared the pogeess out of me!

Then -- Sarpedon was right! -- nature took its course. And, you know, I think I did all right, too!

When I finally left, I almost had a head-on collision with Lyra's crazy red-headed friend, Captain Diana. I think I pulled it off very well, though. I just smiled and went on.

I don't think Diana suspects...



TRIAD

by LEAH BESTLER



"Triad"

(By Leah Bestler)

It was a dark and stormy night -- and destined, it seemed, to get worse. We hadn't seen any Cylons for a long time, and our squadrons were beginning to get bored.

The brawl started over a card game. Lieutenant Gideon had just beaten Sergeant Baleron in what seemed the tenth straight pyramid game, and Baleron was fit to be tied. Diana and I watched, sipping our drinks and not minding too much, until Gideon took a swing at Baleron. Pretty soon, Pandora and Freya joined in, on Baleron's side. Arion decided three against one wasn't quite fair and was getting well into the middle of things when Diana and I looked at one another and said in unison, "Enough!" Then we proceeded to separate the brawlers.

Once I had my disgruntled squadron back in quarters, I pinned their hides to the wall. I was not going to put up with such un-Warrior-like behaviour from anyone, and I was being quite ardent about it when I was interrupted by a bastlike growl.

"Gideon, leave Triad alone!" I was really mad. Brawling was one thing. Picking on my bast, particularly while being disciplined, really got to me.

"I didn't do anything, Captain Laia," Gideon protested.

The bast growled again. Lady and Felgercarb, the other two (I'm not even going to count Clem!), wouldn't even get close.

"Something's wrong with that critter," I said, pulling him out from under my bunk. The poor fellow looked like he was two days into a three-day drunk. His eyes were crossed. If I put him down, he'd have staggered. And, under the bunk, he'd left ample evidence of his inability to find the bast box.

It took about ten microns for the entire squadron to get out the door, headed for Life Centre. The med techs were soon besieged by an entire squadron of babbling idiots.

"Hold it, crew!" I yelled. "I got the bast, I'm the captain, and I get to talk!"

As soon as some measure of order was restored, I explained the bast's unusual symptoms to Lavanna, our senior med tech.

"Come here, Drice," she called to one of the other med techs. "You seem to have phenomenal luck with squadron mascots. See if you can take care of this."

Drice, turning a lovely shade of green, started the examination. After much prodding and poking -- and after removing Triad's claws from his hands and arms for at least the tenth time -- he decided to take X-rays. "That bast must've swallowed something inedible. Orange Squadron is so sloppy anyway, there's no telling what he's got into!"

"That felgercarb-spouting..."

"Cut the language, and pipe down!" I yelled. "Just settle down, and don't give old 'Cylon-breath' any excuses for trouble."

Just about then, the newly-restored quiet was broken by a series of bast shrieks and growls, punctuated by human screams.

"That's our bast!" someone proclaimed. Everyone grinned.

"Go, bast, go!" chuckled Freya, who should know something about bast combat, being blessed with the indescribable Clem.

Just then, a very sheepish Drice called out. "Can someone from Orange Squadron please come back here and help me? I seem to be having a problem with this bast."

Orange Squadron cheered, and I didn't even try to stop them. I was too busy laughing. My bast had gotten loose, barricaded himself behind a door, knocked down some equipment, and managed to plant all four paws in different empty containers. He had a look on his face that clearly said, "I ain't goin' back, sucker. No way. Uh-uh!"

"Come on, Triad. That's a good bast." I picked him up, and he very trustingly went limp in my arms, making little contented bast noises. Drice stared in disbelief.

"You just don't know how to talk to basts," I told him. Drice choked.

Reluctantly, Orange Squadron left for the night, having decided to leave Triad behind for observation and further care. Drice crawled into a corner to lick his wounds, so to speak.

The next day, to our great delight, Triad appeared completely recovered. Drice didn't know why and, when he released our mascot to us, seemed to realise he'd never live it down.

"I guess basts don't like mushies," Gideon observed later. "Or maybe mushies don't like basts."

"You gave Triad what?!" cried Baleron. "I oughtta kill you, you daggit-brain!"

"Oh, yeah?" Gideon began rolling up his sleeves.

Another exciting day with Orange Squadron was well under way.

MARA'S DIARY

(Personal — Under voice lock.)

I've never kept a personal log before. I never had time. But now I'm not in Learning Centre or at the Academy or teaching drill any more, I've got more time than I know what to do with. Between patrols, that is. So I might as well. Besides, writing my pre-OSIRIS biography for the data banks got me to remembering other things. And since my life has gotten rather turned around, it might be a good way to sort things out. So here goes.

Lieutenant Ariella has been wonderful to me. Everyone has, really, but she's gone out of her way to help a green cadet adjust to life on a very big battleship. She helped me through debriefing when I first came aboard, and she took me on a complete tour of the ship. Which didn't do much except confuse me further. I practically need a map to get from one part of the ship to another. I can't remember how many times I've gotten lost! But she's very patient with me, and made it clear that, any time I need someone to talk to, she's there. She's figuratively taken me under her wing (literally, on patrols). I haven't quite figured out if I'm a substitute for the younger sister she lost on Caprica, or if she just thinks the only way to get a decent wingman is to train one herself.

I don't know the other pilots very well yet, so I just keep my mouth shut and my ears open. You can learn a lot that way. Sometimes the others even forget I'm around. That's how I found out Lieutenant Pandora was taking bets on how soon I'd get lost on the ship. I mentioned this to Ariella. She just nodded and said, "That's Pandora, all right."

It's wonderful to have someone I can talk to, to share my hopes and dreams, or just be silly. The last person I could be that open with was Davos.

Or maybe it wasn't. But, Lords, how I missed it when I was hiding out on Caprica! Like the other day. Ariella and I were just sitting and talking, and the conversation got around to lost loves. Ariella asked if I'd ever been in love, and I found myself telling her things not even Davos knew.

During my last yahren at the Learning Centre, Davos would sometimes find a fellow cadet, and I'd draft a dormmate, and we'd all go out together. Somehow, the evenings always ended up with Davos and me talking, while the other two danced.

Well, one night Davos arranged another outing. I tried to find another girl who'd go, but everyone was busy. Except Cyrene, and she'd been on these outings before. I'd barely started on my spiel about how handsome and charming my brother was when she cut me off in mid-sentence. "Save your breath, Mara. I'm not falling for it. I know how these evenings go. I'll end up with the 'blind choice' while you and Davos gossip. Don't try to con me. But the guys your brother finds are usually pretty nice, so I'll go anyway."

The cadet Davos brought along was just as darkly handsome as he was, but with

an open boyishness my mature-beyond-his-yahrens brother lacked. He was only a yahren older than I, and had a name too old and too big for him -- Zachariah. Everyone called him Zac. It fit him much better.

Somehow this evening turned out much differently from past ones. Davos and I started to talk flying, and Zac jumped right into the conversation with us. He was as enthusiastic about flying as I was! Well, in a different way. I loved flying for the sake of flying, while he was determined to be a Warrior



on a battlestar. But we had a lovely evening. By my standards, that is. I think Cyrene finally got up and left. I'm not sure when -- we didn't notice she was gone until they closed the place and threw us out.

Several evenings later, I glanced out the window and saw a dark-haired figure in a cadet uniform approaching. Davos was paying me a surprise visit! I straightened my clothes and hair, then raced down to the front door. I opened it just as he got there and gave him an affectionate hug, our usual greeting.

"Hey, that's some welcome from someone I've only met once!"

Whoops! It wasn't Davos -- it was Zac! I sputtered and blushed, and he laughed. When we both calmed down, he said he couldn't afford to take me anywhere fancy, but it was a lovely evening, and maybe we could go for a walk. I got my cape and told the dorm monitor I was going out for a breath of air.

We strolled through Caprica City and talked for centars. We discussed backgrounds, flying, schooling, flying, older brothers, flying, instructors, flying, and I don't remember what else. I told him of my love of flight and of my desire to emulate Davos; he told me of growing up in the shadow of his brother Apollo and of his desire to better him. I almost didn't get back by curfew.

After that, any dark-haired cadet showing up at the door got a hug as a greeting. Davos and Zac coached me through the entrance exams for the Academy. When I was accepted, I was so happy I had to share it with someone. My dormmates couldn't understand my enthusiasm, and Davos was on the ATLANTIA, so Zac and I went out and got drunk together (the first time in my life!). Of course, I couldn't possibly get past the dorm monitor in that condition -- and besides, it was past curfew. However -- there is a way to climb up to my window -- if you know how. What amazes me is how I did it drunk. I honestly don't remember.

Studies took up most of our time at the Academy, but Zac and I sometimes found a few centars for a walk together. I attended his triad games when I could, and he often came to my drill performances. I was rather awed by his family -- his father commanded a battlestar and was a member of the Council of the Twelve -- but Zac was always very open and friendly. And he was a great comfort when Davos was killed. I always considered him a very close friend.

When he graduated before I did and went to serve on the GALACTICA, I missed him so badly I knew my feelings went deeper than mere friendship. I guess I was in love.

We kept in touch, though our letters were infrequent and were mostly gossip about the Academy and the battlestar.

As far as I know, Zac was on the GALACTICA when the Cylons annihilated the Colonies. I was very relieved to learn the GALACTICA survived the destruction of the Fleet.

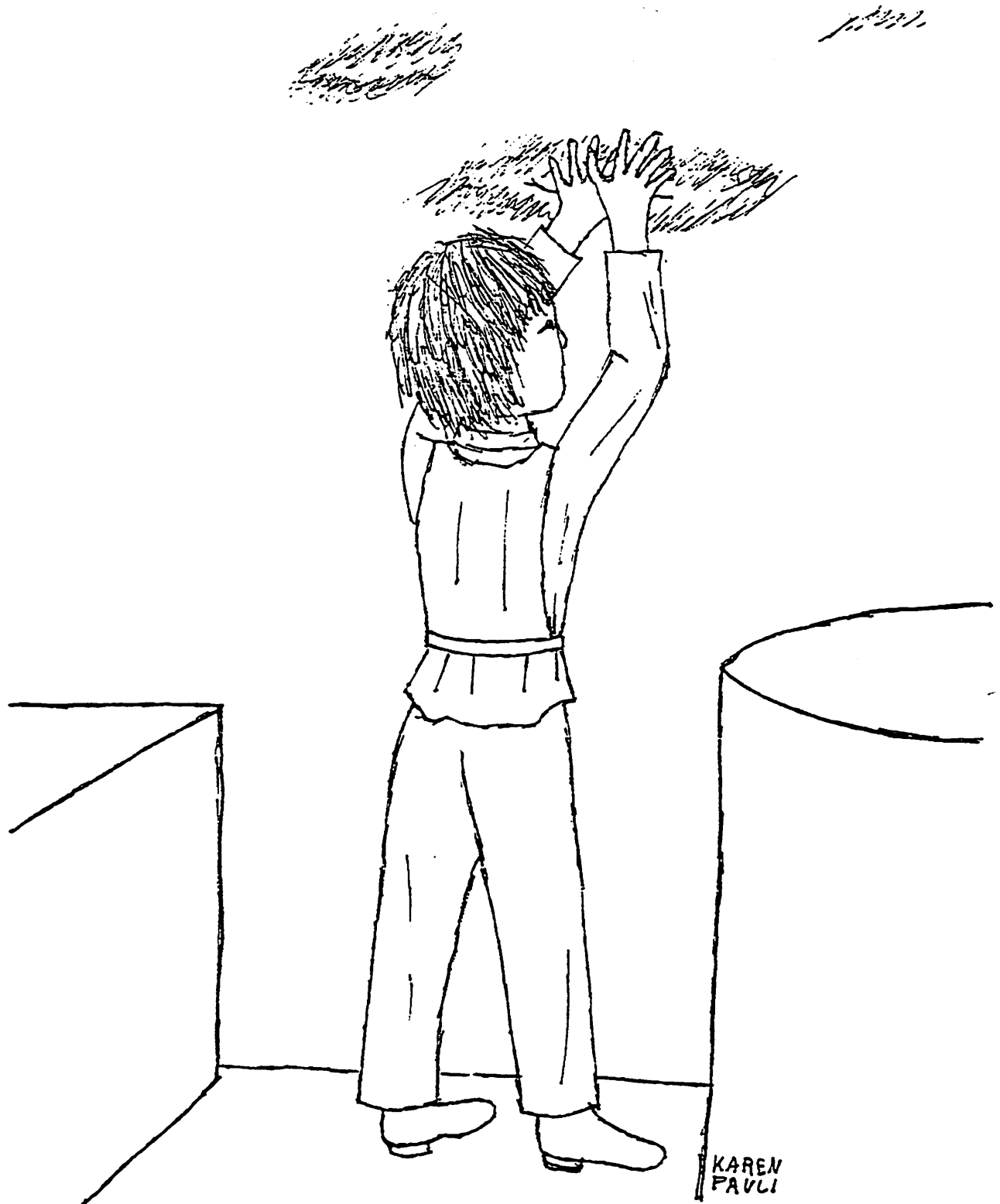
I hope we find them. It would be nice to see Zac again.

I wonder if he loves me...



Daddy, look at the new playmate I found for Muffy!

A Finger in the Dike



"A Finger in the Dike"

(By Karen Pauli)

The following story (?) was submitted for our "Get Rid of the Kid" contest. It doesn't quite follow the rules established for the contest, since it most definitely isn't a 250-word plot summary; but we considered it good enough to be shared with our readers. In this story, Boxey is a hero.

We wouldn't wish this fate on anyone. We think you'll agree it isn't very funny...

Boxey was bored. Instructional period was over, so he was free to play. But there was only Muffit to play with. Dad was on patrol, and so were Starbuck and Boomer. Grandfather and Athena were busy on the bridge. There was some big emergency in Life Centre, so Cassiopeia was busy, too. Rejuvenation Centre was jammed, and all his favourite games were in use.

Hmm. If everyone was so busy, maybe it would be a good chance to do some exploring. Dad didn't like him wandering around the ship. He said it was too dangerous. Boxey had definite boundaries he wasn't supposed to cross. But if he was careful and got back before Dad returned, no one would know. "Come on, Muffit."

Boxey set off down the forbidden corridors, Muffit clanking along behind. Often, he had to wait for the daggit-droid to catch up. He turned down any corridor that looked interesting and seemed to lead toward the outer parts of the ship, not worrying about keeping track of his route; Muffit did that and could lead him back.

The farther Boxey went, the fewer people he encountered. This was a part of the ship he'd never been in, and he had a grand time poking his nose into compartments. Most of the area seemed to be used for storage.

He came to a hatch marked "OUTER HULL ACCESS" and couldn't resist taking a look. This was the actual outer wall of the ship! Just this thickness of metal separated him from space itself! The bulkhead had a few dents in it, and Boxey decided they must have been caused by Cylon attacks.

He was looking at some cannisters stored in the area when he became aware of a faint hissing noise. It seemed to be coming from his right. Boxey walked along the bulkhead, and the noise got louder. It seemed to be coming from a rather large dent. He looked closely and saw a small crack. When he put his hand over the crack, the hissing stopped; when he took his hand away, it started again.

Like all children who depended on the ships for survival, Boxey knew what would happen if there was a hole in the hull — all the atmosphere would be sucked out into space, and everyone on board would die. He'd learned that in

instructional period. He was also taught that little problems can quickly grow into big ones if you don't do something right away -- and if you see anything wrong, it should be immediately reported to an adult.

Boxey considered his problem. Dad would be angry with him for disobeying. But if he didn't tell someone where he was, the crack could get worse, and the hull could blow out. And being punished was better than being dead.

He put his hand over the crack again and felt a suction pulling his palm tight to it. The ship was losing atmosphere; if he went for help, the crack might get bigger while he was gone. But when he blocked the crack with his hand, the air loss stopped. Maybe he could keep the air from escaping. But then, how could he get help?

Muffit, sensing Boxey was worried, whined. Muffit could go get Dad! But Dad was on patrol. "Muffit, go get Grandfather!"

Muffit was programmed to stay close to Boxey. However, this was an order, and there didn't seem to be anything to countermand it, since the boy didn't appear to be in danger.

Boxey repeated his order. "Go to the bridge and get Grandfather!"

The daggit-droid left, and the hatch closed behind him. Boxey didn't know how far it was to the bridge, but he hoped Muffit would hurry.

* * * * *

Muffit could have brought any adult if Boxey had simply told him to "get some help." But the daggit-droid's programming was specifically to "get Grandfather," so he ignored all other crewmen and headed for the bridge. And even for a droid, he wasn't very fast.

* * * * *

Boxey noticed the hissing noise, more of a whistle now, had returned faintly. His hand no longer completely covered the crack. He put his other hand beside his first, and hoped someone would come soon.

* * * * *

Muffit went clanking along a corridor leading to the bridge, and he passed Starbuck and Boomer coming from the landing bay. He noticed them, but continued on his mission.

"Hey, Boomer, where do you suppose the daggit's going without Boxey?"

"Who knows? Maybe they're playing a game. Come on. We've got debriefing."

* * * * *

The crack was getting bigger, sucking harder at Boxey's hands. It was also pulling more air from the room. Why didn't someone come? And where was his daggit?

* * * * *

Muffit entered the bridge, barking furiously. Adama noticed him immediately, and looked around for Boxey. The boy didn't appear, and the daggit went to Adama, still barking.

"Maybe something's wrong," Colonel Tigh suggested.

"Maybe so. I'd better check." Adama followed Muffit from the bridge.

* * * * *

Boxey felt out of breath, like he'd been running. The crack was pulling at his hands more strongly, and he wasn't sure he could get them loose. Where was everyone?

* * * * *

The daggit-droid was travelling the corridors at its fastest pace, which for Adama was a swift walk.

Apollo came out of a cross corridor. "Father, have you seen Boxey? I can't find him anywhere."

When Adama told him about Muffit's actions on the bridge, Apollo joined him in following the daggit.

* * * * *

Why was he getting so sleepy? He had to stay awake! Grandfather? Dad?

* * * * *

The daggit led the two men to a storage area bordering the ship's hull, stopping at the closed hatch of one of the storage compartments. The hatch wouldn't open, which meant either it was jammed or a safety lock had been activated to keep it from opening. Apollo drew his laser to disintegrate the lock, but Adama stopped him.

"No! Boxey might be in the line of fire. And you could damage the hull." He went to a wall com unit and sent for a technician to open the hatch.

* * * * *

Holding his hands over the crack had slowed the air loss enough to keep the bulkhead from blowing out. The damage to the GALACTICA could have been extensive, and certainly many lives would have been lost. Because they were able to patch the crack before it blew, there was only one fatality.

Dr. Wilker spoke softly to the deactivated daggit-droid sitting on his workbench. "You can be reprogrammed for some other child," he said as he bent, squinting, to make adjustments to the droid's wiring.

"Too bad we can't do the same for Apollo."

CONTEST WINNER

"Purple and Orange?" is pleased to print the winning entry in our "Get Rid of the Kid" contest. While we do not normally agree with mixing universes, the idea works so well, and Sharon has such a delightful sense of humour...

"A Meeting of Strangers"

(By Sharon Monroe)

Damaged in a Cylon attack, the GALACTICA sends a task force, accompanied by Apollo and Starbuck, to a convenient nearby solar system to search for a rare mineral needed to repair the battlestar's engines. Boxey and Muffit stow away on the shuttle.

Apollo and Starbuck scout for hostile forces. Boxey tags along, unseen. The Warriors discover a large blue box in the middle of a clearing. They are greeted by a cheerful curly-haired man wearing a long scarf, and his suspicious, knife-wielding female companion. The man identifies himself as "the Doctor."

"Doctor who?" Apollo asks.

"Ah, you've heard of me." The man then asks them what they are doing on an uninhabited planet.

The Warriors inform him they need a rare mineral to continue their journey. The Doctor has just the thing, and is happy to supply them with a quantity of the mineral from his supplies.

Starbuck expresses amazement that so many supplies can come from so small an area.

"Space is only relative," the Doctor explains.

Boxey sneaks into the large box and begins exploring the vast ship inside.

The task force returns to the GALACTICA, where they discover Boxey to be missing. Apollo returns to the planet but can find no trace of the Doctor, his mysterious box, a spaceship, or Boxey.

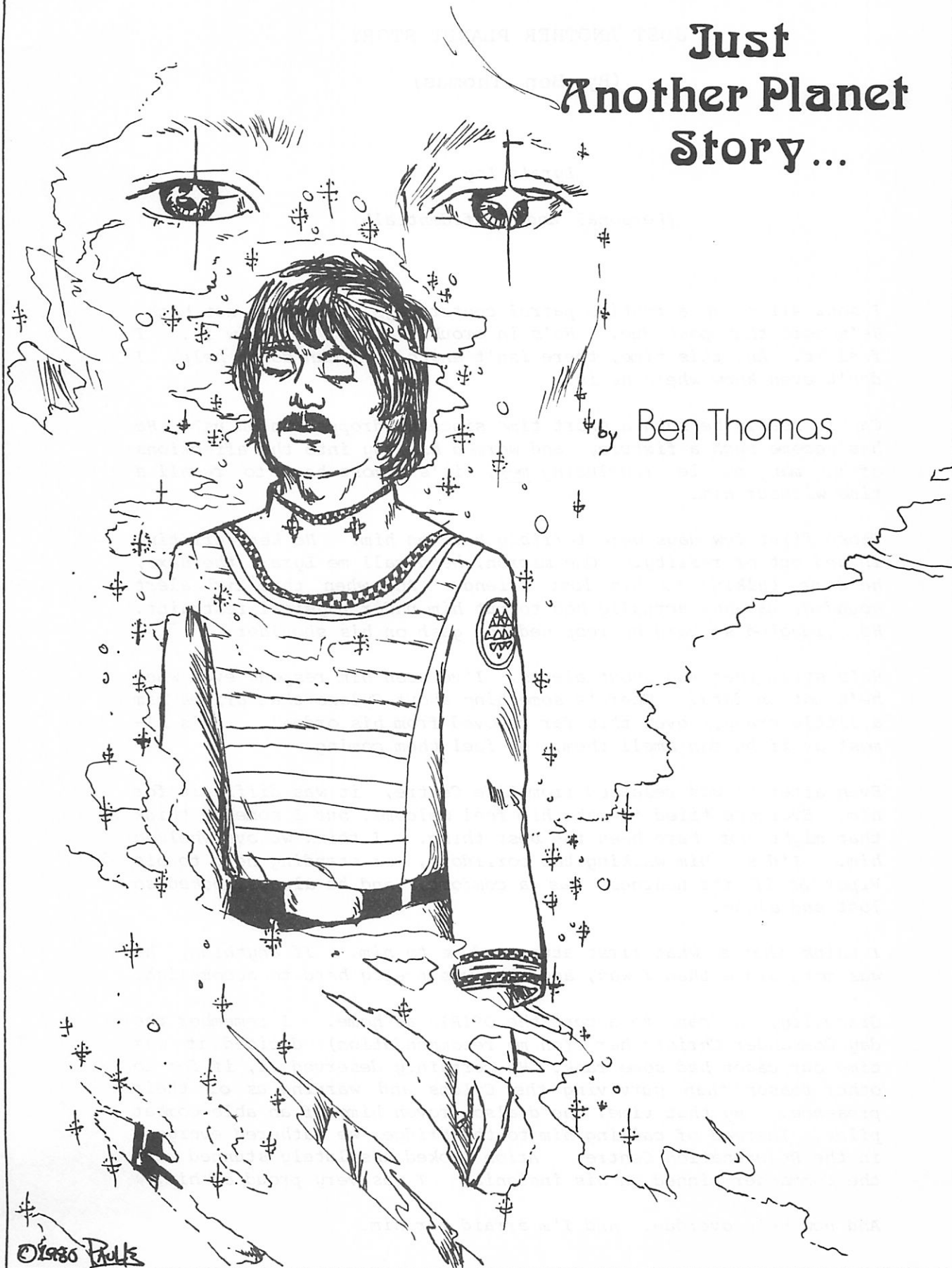
The GALACTICA continues its search for life, liberty, and the American way without the kid and his daggit. Apollo decides adults are easier to handle than kids, and adopts Starbuck.

PANDORA'S
BOX



Just Another Planet Story...

by Ben Thomas



JUST ANOTHER PLANET STORY

(By Ben Thomas)

Lyra's Log

(Personal and Confidential)

I sent Arion on a routine patrol centars ago, and he's not back. He's more than past due. He's in trouble again. I know it. I feel it. And this time, there isn't anything I can do to help. I don't even know where he is.

Can it really be such a short time since he dropped in on us? He has become such a fixture, and wormed his way into the affections of so many people (including me), it's almost hard to recall a time without him.

Those first few days were terribly hard on him. He kept drifting in and out of reality. One micron, he'd call me Lyra; the next, he'd be talking to his lost friend. And when that red alert sounded, Lavanna actually had to put him under physical restraint. He struggled so hard he reopened the gash on his shoulder.

He's still that way about alerts. I've seen him respond even when he's not on duty. There's something about Cylons that drives him a little crazy, even this far removed from his ordeal. It's almost as if he can smell them, or feel them coming.

Even after he was released from Life Centre, it was difficult for him. Everyone tried to make him feel welcome, but I somehow think that might not have been the best thing. I think we overwhelmed him. I'd see him walking the corridors, or standing next to his Viper as if its nearness was a comfort, and he always looked so lost and alone.

I think that's what first attracted me to him. If anything, he was more alone than I was, and that was pretty hard to accomplish.

Gradually, he came to accept the OSIRIS as home. I remember the day Commander Christopher (on my recommendation) decided it was time our cadet had some rank. He certainly deserved it, if for no other reason than surviving the Cylons and warning us of their presence. By that time, he'd also proven himself an able combat pilot. Instead of calling him to the bridge, we gathered everyone in the Rejuvenation Centre. Arion looked absolutely stunned when the Commander pinned on his insignia. I was very proud of him.

And now he's overdue, and I'm afraid for him.

Arion pulled his Viper around and checked the scanner once again. The readout still showed the same thing. The planet had no tylium. Not a drop. Frak! He glanced through his canopy at the ship on his left, then gave the other pilot the news.

"I get the same thing. Let's head home. Unless..."

"Unless?" Arion was always looking for an "unless."

"That moon on the far side. We could swing around and check it out."

Arion glanced down at a gauge. "Our fuel's a little..."

"I've already got it computed. We can make a quick pass and let the planet's gravity swing us back out. We'll get to the OSIRIS with just enough fuel."

"I don't know, Periander..."

"Come on!" Periander's Viper streaked away.

"Felgercarb!" Arion barrelled after the disappearing ship. Why was he so reluctant? This was his bag, his kind of mission. The kind of escapade he was well known for on the OSIRIS. Why was this time different? Then he realised what the problem was.

Periander reminded Arion of someone he wanted to forget, someone who'd been Arion's idol and closest friend. Someone who'd died. Sarpedon.

Lords, why couldn't he leave Sarpedon's ghost alone? Sarpedon died at the "peace conference," sectars ago. Why couldn't he get rid of his hope for his friend's survival?

Periander was a living version of Sarpedon. He was dark, with dark hair and black-hole eyes. He was a fantastic pilot. When Arion looked at him, it hurt. He felt terribly alone.

"Yahoooo! Tylium!"

Arion's eyes flew to his scanner, but before he could confirm Periander's findings, something streaked past him. The universe began to spin. "Oh, God!"

"Arion!" Periander screamed. One micron, something flashed above his Viper; the next, Arion's ship was rolling end over end, falling toward the moon. "Meteor!" he snapped. "Arion, what's your situation?"

"Starboard wing's sheared right off. Starboard engine completely out." Keep talking, or you may snap -- for good, this time. "Fuel leak. I've got close to zero control."

"Don't panic, Sergeant. I'm coming."

"No! You've got just enough fuel to get back to the OSIRIS."

"I'm not leaving you, Sergeant."

"Go back and get help. I'll land this thing."

"Frak! All right. I'll be back in a flash."

Arion was terrified. He couldn't control his Viper, and the surface of the moon was swelling up at an incredible speed. He kept battling the controls, but all he did was level the ship. Level her upside down, though, and when she hit the ground, he'd be smashed like a daggit under a battlestar.

So he closed his eyes. How long did it take to die? Was it very fast? Wasn't your life supposed to flash before your eyes?

"Oh!" Arion's eyes flew open. His skin tingled, and he was getting dizzy. A strange sensation washed over him. "Oh!" he repeated. The cockpit filled with light, glowing, twinkling like a thousand miniature stars. The tingling increased.

And the Viper righted herself.

"Lords of Kobol!" Arion's hands shot out to the controls. He'd been given a chance, and he wasn't going to waste it. For some reason he couldn't fathom, the landing gear actually came down, though they were torn off when his ship skimmed a patch of rocky ground. Then the Viper hit mud -- a great expanse of wet, slick mud. The ship bounced and began to slide -- straight toward a high stand of trees. But luck was with him, and the Viper came to a stop only metres from the first of the mammoth trees. Arion let out a great sigh, his head falling forward. "Oh, my Lord..."

* * * * *

When Periander climbed from his ship, he saw Colonel Lyra descending on him.

"Lieutenant, where's Sergeant Arion?"

"Colonel Lyra! Ar... Sergeant Arion's Viper was struck by a meteorite. He crashed on a moon on the far side of the planet we were investigating."

"Why didn't you help him?" She was angry, an anger that came from concern. Periander knew she was far too attached to her pilots. One day, someone wouldn't come back, and she'd have a complete collapse.

"Fuel, Colonel. I had just enough to get back."

New anger sprang up in the Colonel -- military anger. "And what in Hades were the two of you doing out with just enough fuel to get back?"

Periander was silent.

Lyra sagged and let out a long sigh, then straightened again. "The two of you... Frak! I knew I should never have let the two of you go on patrol together... Lieutenant, refuel that Viper and get to Hades back to that moon. And you better pray to all the Lords that he's all right."

"He can't go."

"What?" Lyra spun to find Captain Diana standing behind her. "What are you talking about?"

"There's a Cylon base star on the fringes of our scanner range. She's keeping her distance, but she's also keeping up. We can't send a Viper out now."

"Oh, Lords..."

* * * * *

When Arion jumped from his Viper, he sank well past his ankles into mud. It was almost impossible to pull his feet free. When he reached the clump of trees, the mud disappeared abruptly. The trees obviously drank great quantities of water. He turned and looked back.

The expanse of mud reminded him of a vacation on Taura several yahrens back. He and his parents were camping. It was right after Sarpedon went into the Academy, and Arion's parents decided on the trip to help him forget about it.

Perseus, a close friend, went along. The two young men went out on long walks, gone all day. One day, they went walking across a huge dried lake. The ground was broken and cracked, and here and there were skeletons, fish who'd finally given up their last efforts to survive in the remaining puddles of water.

Suddenly it began to rain. It was very abrupt, for the day had been bright and sunny. Arion began to run; he didn't like rain. The constant pitter-patter on his face drove him crazy. Just as he, with Perseus at his heels, reached a large outcropping of rock, it began to pour.

The torrent lasted over two centars, then stopped just as abruptly as it began. The sun came out again. The huge dried flat had turned to mud, and they would have to cross it to get back to camp.

The mud was thick. They tried not to slip, but when the two finally got back to camp, they were totally covered with mud from head to foot. They walked into the light of the fire just as Arion's mother came out of the tent. She let out a scream and dropped the bowl she was carrying, sending meat patties flying. Arion's father ran into the camp carrying a very large stick.

Arion and Perseus were stunned. "Dad?"

"Who...? Arion?"

Perseus looked at Arion; Arion looked back. They looked like some primitive men or demons. They began to laugh. Soon, they were clinging to each other, supporting each other.

"Arion! Perseus! Go clean up immediately!"

And that took at least another centar, Arion remembered. He smiled, looking out over the mud. Then he frowned suddenly. Perseus was probably dead -- and his parents -- and he hadn't even been able to give them a proper burial. He hadn't been able to go back to Taura at all.

A deep loneliness filled Arion, and he sank to the ground. "Oh, Lords..."

He heard someone call his name. It was very quiet, almost like the wind. Perhaps he'd been mistaken... No! He heard it again.

Arion looked up. Before him was a cloud of light. His eyes widened, and his mouth dropped open. The cloud was rotating slowly, sparkling. An arm extended from the spinning mass and reached toward Arion.

He couldn't move. He stood transfixed, stunned, as the arm of light touched his forehead. His eyes closed, and he felt himself leave his body. It happened so fast he had no time to wonder. He was floating upward, surrounded by a nimbus of light.

Suddenly, Arion was somewhere else -- a ready room. But not on the OSIRIS. Somewhere else. The room was empty... No! Wait! Not empty! There was someone there, a Colonial Warrior. But who...? If only the man would turn...

Lords of Kobol! It was Perseus! Alive!

* * * * *

"Lyra, you have to understand," Colonel Tyr said. "We can't send men to that moon, not with a base star so close. The tylium our patrol discovered must be a Cylon mine."

"You mean you're leaving that pilot stranded out there?"

"The Cylons..."

"Exactly! Ar... That pilot is stranded on a Cylon moon, and you'd leave him at their mercy!"

"Lyra, do you think I want that? Don't accuse me of anything of the sort. You of all people know how much it hurts to send a pilot to his death."

That stunned Lyra. Tyr didn't say things like that often. He gave an order, then shut up. And what he said was true. Tyr wouldn't, couldn't condemn a pilot to death unless absolutely necessary. "You're right, sir. Excuse me."

She turned, and Tyr stopped her. "I care about Arion, too, Lyra. And I hope he's all right."

* * * * *

When Arion awoke, he didn't know how much time had passed. He stood and stretched. Strange, he thought. I'm not at all stiff. You'd think sleeping on that hard ground...

A perfume reached Arion's nostrils, and he looked around. What a lovely smell... He followed the smell and was startled by what he found. The great mud flat was gone. In its place was a seemingly endless field of flowers. As far as he could see, extending over the horizon, was a carpet of green, with bright blotches of colour. White, yellows, oranges, reds, purples, blues... It was incredible. They'd grown overnight -- like a desert after a rain.

And again Arion was hit by memories. Memories of a great field not far from his home on Taura, a field not as big, but as beautiful. He remembered a day when he and Daphne had gone walking. The air was alive with butterflies. He was feeling so good, so alive. Then he noticed Daphne's expression.

"What is it?" he asked.

"'What is it?'" She turned away from him and sat down. "I was trying to think how to tell you."

"Tell me what?"

"I'm leaving."

"Leaving?"

"My parents are sending me to school on Picon."

"Picon? But... I thought you were going to Caprica with me!"

"I was. But I had an offer from my aunt and uncle. He's dean of a very good school, and I've been accepted there."

"But... But, how will we see each other? It'll be yahrens..."

"There's our breaks," she replied.

"Breaks? A few sections each yahren? How can you do this? I love you!"

"No, Arion." Her voice was like a slap. "You love Sarpedon."



"Sarpedon? No, I don't. I love you."

"You may love me, Arion, but you're not in love with me. There's a difference."

"I... I... I am in love with you! I'm certainly not in love with Sarpedon, Daphne. Lords, I'm not!" Tears sprang to his eyes.

She reached out and wiped them away. "No, maybe you're not in love with him, but you do love him. There's nothing wrong with that. But you see, you love him more than you're in love with me. And I can't take second place. I won't." She stood up and walked away, leaving him there. He never saw her again.

Arion heard his name and spun around. An arm flashed out from the whirling cloud, touching him. Darkness flooded everything, and then he was in a forest. But not on a planet -- a forest inside an agro-ship. And there was Daphne. She was alive -- but she wasn't alone. There was a baby in her arms. A man walked up to her and took the infant. To the father of that child, Daphne was never in second place...

They vanished, and Arion was alone again, in a field that reminded him so much of Taura. He shuddered. The cloud was gone again. Maybe it had never been there. Maybe he'd hit his head on something in the crash. Maybe he was dead...

But the sweet smell of the flowers called to him, pulling him away from thoughts of his own death, reminding him again of that last time he saw Daphne. He'd sat in the field for centars. The sun set, and a cool breeze arose. The flowers closed, and the butterflies disappeared for the night. His brother found him.

"Arion! We've been looking all over for you!"

Arion looked up, his eyes dull.

"Arion, what's wrong?"

There was no answer. Arion just looked away. His brother sat down beside him. "Look, Arion, I know my company hasn't ever thrilled your life, but why don't you tell me? I never repeat secrets. Not really important ones, anyway."

So he told his brother everything -- about Daphne and the school on Picon, and what she'd said about Sarpedon.

His brother just nodded, then asked, "Is it true?"

"Oh, Janeb, I don't know. Sarpedon means a lot to me. He's one of the most important people in my life. But, for Sagan's sake, I don't want to marry him!"

"If Daphne asked you to go to Picon with her, asked you not to

become a Warrior and to marry her, would you?" Arion stared, surprised by the question, as Janeb continued. "That would mean you'd probably hardly ever see Sarpedon again. Could you do that for Daphne?"

There was a long pause. Janeb broke the silence. "You didn't answer right away. You had to think about it..."

"I'd do it!"

"No matter. If you really loved her, your answer would have been immediate. She'd be the most important thing in your life, more important than me, mom or dad, Perseus, the Academy, or Sarpedon. You have to love her that much. Love her -- or let her go."

Arion burst into tears, and Janeb let him cry. Then they went home. Janeb never said a word, but in that last sector before he entered the Academy, Arion and his brother were closer than at any other time in their lives.

For a third time, Arion sensed a presence. He jumped to his feet, a rock in his hands, but the living light was faster. The arm shot out, and for a third time, darkness swept over Arion. He left his body again, and found himself in the midst of an audience, all screaming and cheering. It was a triad game. Scanning the faces of the crowd, Arion found Janeb -- alive, and -- like Perseus -- in the uniform of a Colonial Warrior. Then the game vanished, and Arion was back in a field, the forest behind him. The cloud was gone.

* * * * *

Two doors slid open, and two centurians strode into the darkened room, approaching the high dais in its centre.

"By your command."

"Speak, centurians," acknowledged the gleaming IL-series Cylon.

"The pilot on the moon is alive."

"And the OSIRIS?"

"Keeping its distance."

"Excellent."

"Shall we capture the Warrior?" one of the centurians asked.

"No." The centurians were puzzled, unable to fathom their commander's mind. "We shall withdraw. And when the OSIRIS comes to the rescue..."

If Cylons could smile, they would have.

* * * * *

The days were long. It grew very hot as the moon orbited its planet, drawing closer to its sun. The flowers dried up. Then the moon began to pull away. The sky absorbed great quantities of moisture during the heat of the day; now, clouds were forming.

It was exactly like the last furlon Arion and Sarpedon spent planetside. A cold, rainy day on Caprica, shortly before the Destruction...

Why did he keep thinking about Sarpedon? Especially since the crash... Why couldn't he let Sarpedon go?

The cloud returned. Its arm reached out to Arion, but this time, he was faster. He fell to the ground and rolled quickly. The cloud floated toward him, arms whirling. Arion jumped to his feet, drew his laser, and yelled, "Stop!"

The cloud obeyed.

"Who are you?"

If it could answer, it didn't. It just hovered, glowing and rotating.

"Perseus?"

For a moment, a ghostly image, like a hologram of Perseus's face, appeared. Then it faded.

"Daphne!"

Her face formed briefly, then vanished.

"Ja... Janeb?"

The cloud impersonated his brother, but shed the guise almost at once. It trembled, seemed to surrender.

"What are you? Who...?"

The cloud moved again, closing on Arion, but this time without reaching out with menacing arms. Arion didn't fire -- he was frozen, unable even to breathe. Then he was in the midst of the swirling light.

A presence filled him. His skin tingled, and he felt light. The cloud withdrew, and Arion collapsed to the ground. He felt as if his bones had turned to rubber. He knew what -- who -- the cloud was. His own voice echoed in his head. Why couldn't he let Sarpedon's ghost alone? Why couldn't he let Sarpedon go? Why did he keep thinking about...

The cloud was Sarpedon.

The glowing mass of the cloud became a column, thickening, slowly coalescing. And Sarpedon stood before Arion.

"Oh, my Lord... I... I... God!"

"Arion."

He began to tremble violently.

"Arion."

He was trembling as if in the grip of an epileptic seizure.

"Arion, look at me."

Arion looked up, into eyes he hadn't seen since... "You're not dead. I knew you couldn't be. Not you. Not Sarpedon. You couldn't die..." Tears were flowing down his face.

Sarpedon went to him and knelt down. "No, Arion. I'm not dead. Not death as you understand it."

Arion was puzzled. "Not as I understand it?"

"As you, as the people of the Colonies, define it, I am dead."

"Dead?"

"But life does not end with the body's death. Death of the body is not the end of a man."

"I... I don't understand..."

"Shhhh. Don't try to understand. Know only that the Lords are very wise. They understand. They saw that the mind, the soul, still exists when a man's body does not. We go on, to another place. Unless..."

"Un... Unless...?"

"Unless there is something, someone to keep us here."

"Keep? Here?"

"You are powerful, Arion. There is a power about you. You are keeping me here."

"Me?"

"Arion." He touched the young man's face. "Arion. You won't let me leave. You won't let me go on. You are holding me here."

"You don't want to stay?"

"I don't belong here, Arion."

"Then I'll go with you!"

"You don't belong there."

Arion's shoulders sagged. It began to rain. "You don't want to be with me. You don't care..."

"I do. No matter how powerful you are, you couldn't hold me here if I didn't care."

"You do?"

"Lords, yes!"

"Then stay with me. Please! I can't live without you. I've lost so much... No one cares..."

"Oh, Arion, many people care. Lyra, Diana, Pandora, Periander, Lavanna. They all care. And I've shown you that many of those you care about are still alive. Perseus and your brother are Warriors on the GALACTICA. And Daphne is with the GALACTICA's fleet."

"But -- you! You are the most important of all. I need you. I've learned so much lately. Like how love comes in so many forms. There are so many kinds of love. I love you." Arion's voice caught, and he began to cry again. "Please!" he begged.

Sarpedon drew Arion into his arms. "Don't you see? You don't need me. Didn't you hear what you've just said? I've prevented you from going on. You've matured so much, grown so much. And I've watched and protected you. But now, we have to go our own ways. You must go on here, in your stage of life. I must go on in mine. Let me go."

Arion had quieted, but tears still ran down his cheeks. "Not yet. Please. Not yet."

They sat awhile in the rain. Then Sarpedon got to his feet.

"No! Not yet!" Arion cried.

"No. Not yet." Sarpedon reached out a hand and helped Arion up, then led him into the trees, where the branches sheltered them from the rain. He sat down, leaning against a huge trunk and pulling Arion down beside him. Then he took his friend into his arms and rested his head against Arion's.

"I could go with you..."

"Oh, Arion," Sarpedon sighed.

"No, I guess not. But you'll visit? We can talk?"

"No. I can't come to you again. But you can talk to me. I'll



hear you." He pulled Arion closer and stroked his hair. "I'll hear you."

* * * * *

"Lyra!" Diana entered the landing bay at a run. "The base star dropped back! She's gone!"

"Then we're launching." replied Lyra, racing for her ship.

Centons later, four Vipers sped away from the OSIRIS, heading toward...

* * * * *

"...the moon," reported a centurian.

"Excellent! Excellent!"

Another centurian spoke. "We have a recording of the last transmissions from the grounded pilot."

"A recording? Play it."

There was a pause as the Cylon activated a panel. Then, "Yahooo! Tylium!...Oh, God!..."

"That voice!" exclaimed the commander. "That voice!"

The recording continued. "Arion! Meteor! Arion, what's your situation?...Starboard wing's sheared..."

"That's Arion! Attack!"

"But the OSIRIS will be warned," replied one of the centurians. "It will not go to the moon for tylium. The ambush will be ruined."

"Do not question my orders! Do as I say! Kill that pilot!"

* * * * *

Sarpedon looked up at the sky, the stars. Then he looked back at the sleeping Arion. "I'm leaving, Arion. Let go of the past. Face your future. Don't worship another, for no man is better than any other. Now, let me go."

A great weight lifted from Sarpedon. He could feel his release -- and Arion's. His body began to shimmer. It paled, then grew translucent. He let Arion slowly fall through him to come to a gentle rest against the tree, careful not to wake his friend. Then he shed his body completely and rose upward, a spinning cloud of light and energy. For a moment, there was a feeling of regret. To stay... But, no. Their destinies lay on different planes...

Sarpedon disappeared.

* * * * *

"Commander, we are ready to launch."

"Then what are you waiting for?"

"By your command." The centurians turned to leave.

Then the commander heard his name called. He swivelled about, then quickly drew back. Before him hovered a whirling, glowing cloud of light. "Centurians!"

The two Cylons turned -- and watched, as the cloud changed, growing longer, more solid, coalescing not into its true form -- but that didn't matter, since the Cylons didn't know its true form -- but into a semi-transparent copy of Arion. "Hello, Asmodeus."

"Argghh!"

"How are you?" Arion/Sarpedon smiled. "Your gears all turning smoothly? Your turbos kicking over fine?"

"Fire!" Asmodeus ordered. "Destroy him!"

The centurians obeyed at once, but the energy bolts from their lasers passed completely through Arion/Sarpedon and struck the ceiling. There was an explosion, and a large piece of metal ripped away, falling and crushing the two centurians.

"Oh, Asmodeus, is that any way to greet an old friend?" Arion/Sarpedon approached the Cylon, arms outstretched.

"Keep away from me, Arion!" Asmodeus backed away.

"Any way," continued Arion/Sarpedon, "to greet your 'useful pet human'?"

"Keep... Keep...awaaaay!" Asmodeus toppled backward from the dais, hitting the floor with a crash.

Arion/Sarpedon vanished.

* * * * *

Lyra was the first to find Arion. She shook him gently, and he woke. He looked about for a moment, then sighed and looked into Lyra's eyes.

His eyes were different. She couldn't place what it was, but they were different. "Are you all right, Arion?"

He smiled. "I'm fine," he replied. "Let's go home." He walked toward the waiting Vipers, giving Diana, Morgan, and Periander

only a passing nod.

"Lyra, is something wrong with him?" Diana asked.

"Not any more," whispered Lyra.

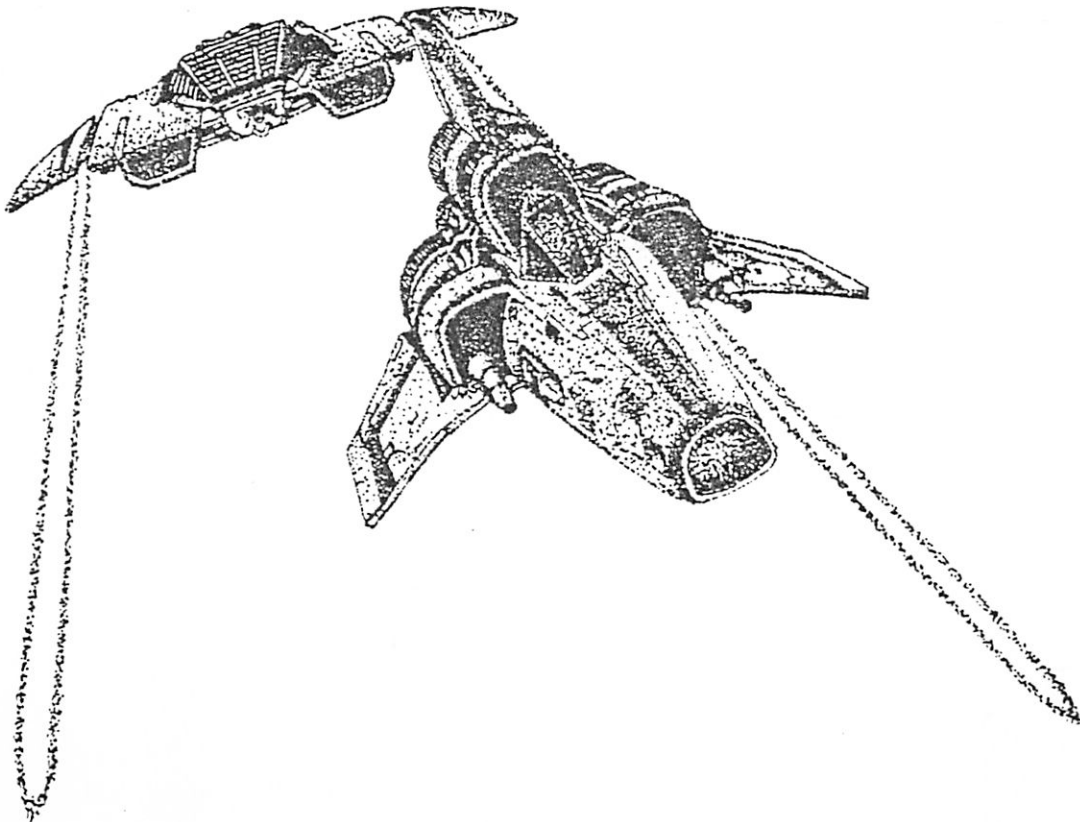
Lyra's Log

(Personal and Confidential)

Arion is back -- and he isn't. The Arion I sent on patrol is not the one who returned. He's changed. Drastically. He's grown, expanded, moved away from or toward...

He's just "different." I saw it the moment his eyes met mine. Perhaps he'll tell me what happened, but I wouldn't bet my life's savings on it.

I'm going to miss the Arion who needed me. He reminded me so much of my son. But all boys grow. I hate good-byes as much as Starbuck does, but this time I have compensation. It will be a pleasure to get to know Arion, the man.



"FRAK NEILSEN"

(Tune: "What Do You Do with a Drunken Sailor?")

CHORUS:

Join the Colonial Warriors! Join the Colonial Warriors! Join the Colonial
Warriors!
Frak the Neilsen ratings!

How does Adama lead them? How does Adama lead them? How does Adama lead
them?
"Circle all the wagons!"

CHORUS

Adama's got us on a set course. (Etc.)
What's that shining planet?

CHORUS

What is Apollo's problem? (Etc.)
Find a babysitter!

CHORUS

What do we want to do with Boxey? (Etc.)
Feed him to the Cylons!

CHORUS

What did they finally do with the daggit? (Etc.)
Twiki has a new pet.

CHORUS

What do you do with a smart chimpanzee? (Etc.)
Dress it as a daggit.

CHORUS

What did they do with the undressed daggit? (Etc.)
Arrested it for flashing.

CHORUS

What kind of food do they feed the daggit? (Etc.)
Adama still sells Alpo.

CHORUS

What is Starbuck always doing? (Etc.)
Even odds are better.

CHORUS

Who did Starbuck meet in the launch bay? (Etc.)
Well, I'm sure it wasn't Vader!

CHORUS

Who is that pretty Med Tech? (Etc.)
(spoken) "What's a 'socialator,' Mom?"

CHORUS

What can we say of Colonel Tigh? (Etc.)
Nothing whatsoever.

CHORUS

What do you do with a washed-up fighter? (Etc.)
Kick him up to Colonel!

CHORUS

What should they have done to Athena? (Etc.)
Locked her in a closet!

CHORUS

What's a better role for Jensen? (Etc.)
Dress her as a daggit!

CHORUS

Why do the Cylons miss their target? (Etc.)
They shoot by committee.

CHORUS

What do you do with a rusty Cylon? (Etc.)
Strip him down for spare parts!

CHORUS

What do we do in the landing bay? (Etc.)
I don't know -- but duck!

CHORUS

Tell me, just what is a "centon"? (Etc.)
Tell you in a minute.

CHORUS

Dr. Zee is very bright. (Etc.)
 Soon he will go nova.

CHORUS

What did they do with the show's worst writer? (Etc.)
 Made him the producer.

CHORUS

What was Larson's inspiration? (Etc.)
 May the Force be with you!

CHORUS

Why is ABC unhappy? (Etc.)
 SF is expensive.

CHORUS

Hi, ho, and watch the budget! (Etc.)
 Use some more stock footage!

CHORUS

Where is the rag-tag Fleet a-goin'? (Etc.)
 To another network.

CHORUS

And now for some OSIRIS verses:

CHORUS:

Join the battlestar OSIRIS! Join the battlestar OSIRIS! Join the battlestar
 OSIRIS!
 Bring some more Midori!

We were on deep star exploration. (Etc.)
 What the frak is "V'ger"?

CHORUS

Tell us where to look for Earth. (Etc.)
 Left turn at Diversey!

CHORUS

What can be said about our squadrons? (Etc.)
 They sure clash in the daylight!

CHORUS

What can you say about our zoo? (Etc.)
The crew should all reside there!

CHORUS

Sergeant Arion always blushes. (Etc.)
Blush, blush, blush, blush, blush, blush!

CHORUS

Who can you get more drunk than Arion? (Etc.)
Starbuck on a good night!

CHORUS

How can we describe Lavanna? (Etc.)
Her appetite is legend!

CHORUS

How desperate really is Lavanna? (Etc.)
Any man will do?

CHORUS

We need a verse about Diana. (Etc.)
Suggestions will be taken.

CHORUS

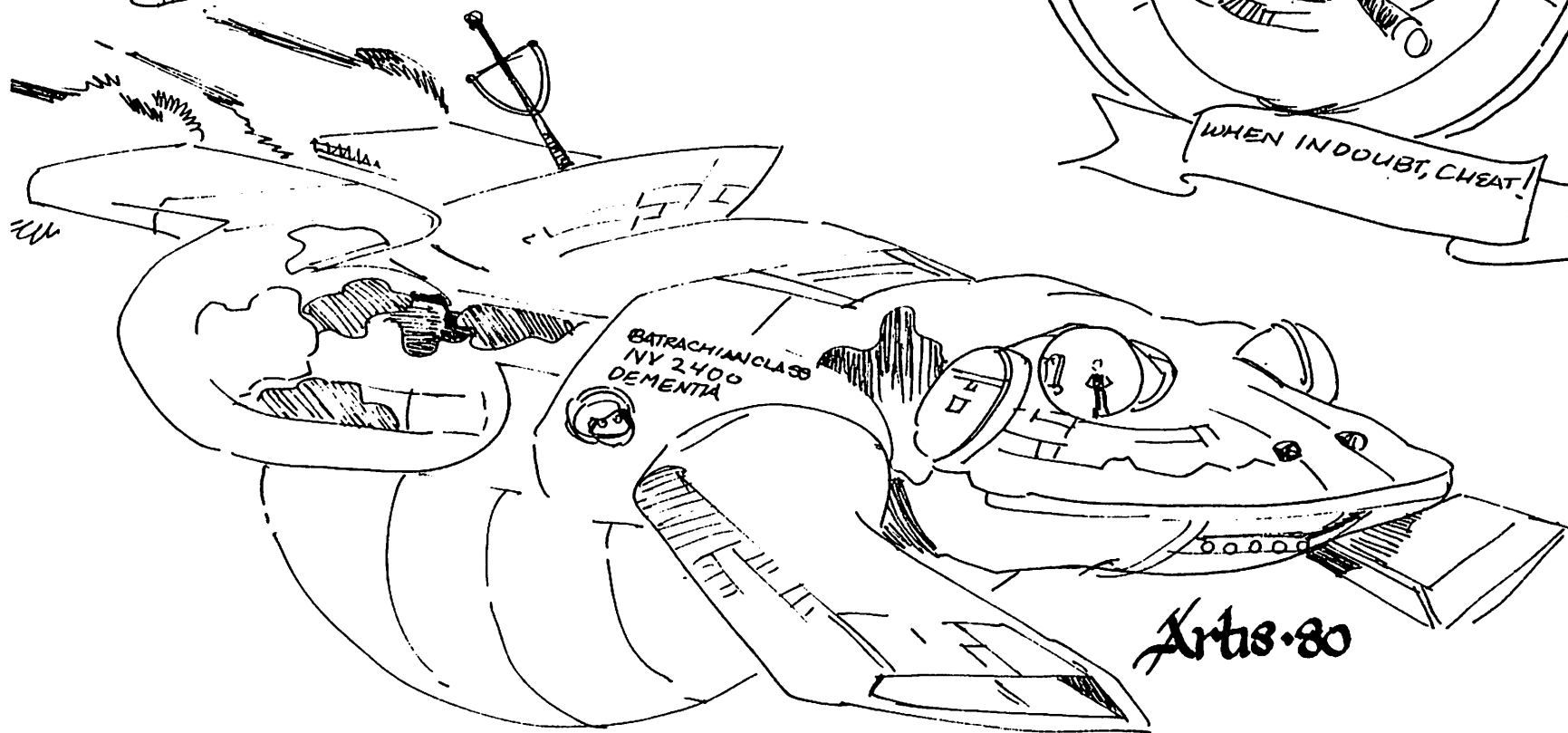
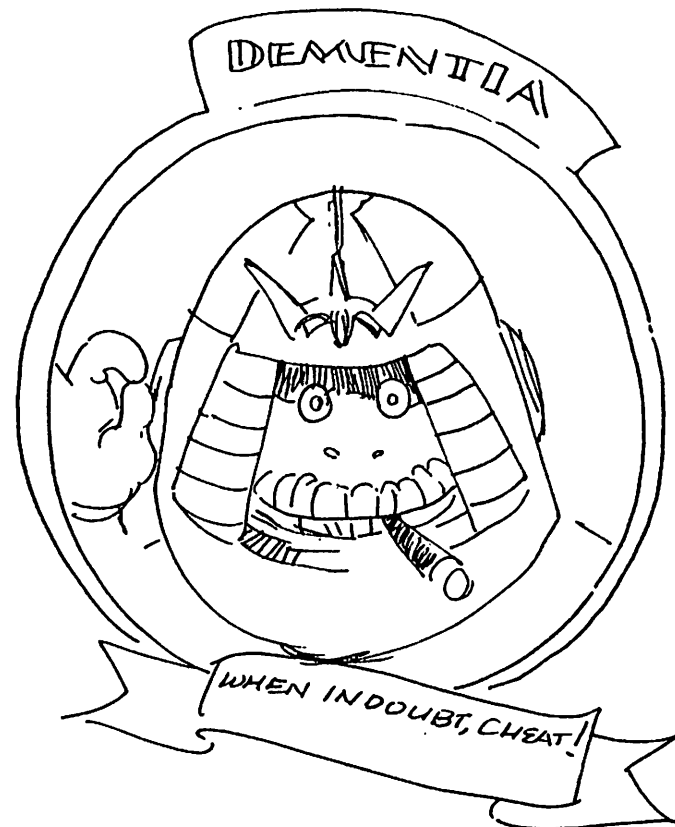
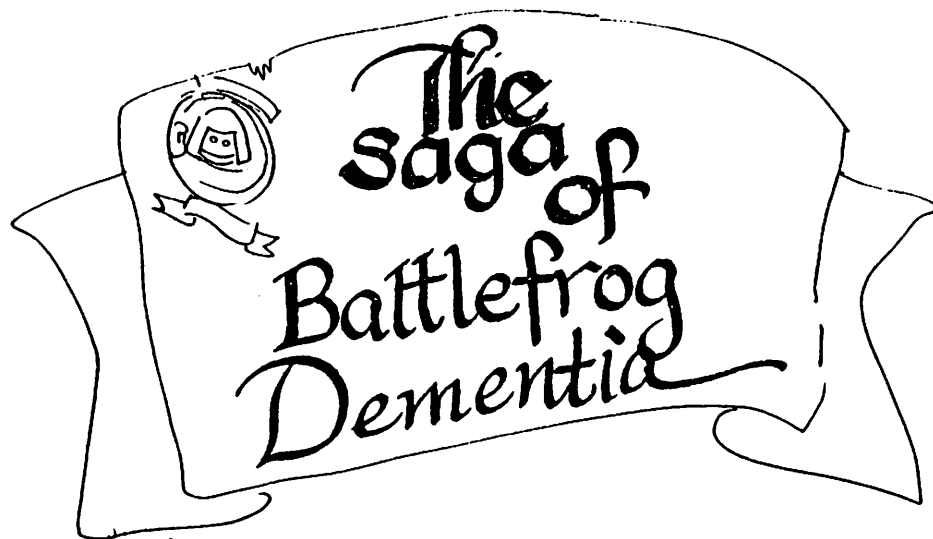
Baleron had a thing for Athena. (Etc.)
Well, nobody's perfect!

CHORUS

Some of these verses were written in a moment of insanity by Judy Bentley and Karen Pauli, with kibitzing from Todd Voros, on 9 April 1980. The others were composed by several members of the crew of the OSIRIS on 26 April 1980.

New verses are always welcome -- especially if they scan!





"Purple and Orange?" presents the following story somewhat tongue-in-cheek. The editors agreed not to make any effort to change it, other than to correct spelling and punctuation. This, we remind our readers, is a classic example of what is sometimes called "purple prose" and should, we believe, produce at least a chuckle or two...

"Dementia"

(By Clyde Jones and Robert Smerp)

Far from unaided human sight, deep within the star-strewn ebon cloak of night wrapped around the Colonies, something stirred. In stellar dimness, a vast, ungainly shape surged through the void; upon its scarred and greenish surface glittered myriads of tiny lights. At the forequarter of the shape dimly glowed a monstrous cavern, nearly bisecting the forward control and command module, in the manner of a gargantuan mouth. Tiny metallic shapes nestled in niches; a few glistening humanoid shapes meandered around them tuning and cleaning, swearing and belching quietly. Maintenance duty for the severely understaffed crew of oldsters was a pain, and the food was terrible. If only the cooks had joined the escape party, things would have been better. The crew mused upon the inadequacies of life while they worked.

Within the port conning dome, the Commander paced, a powerful figure of a man dressed in the scintillant blue of a command suit. Around him, in spaces that should have been filled with busy command auxiliaries, rode silence. Emptiness. Ghosts of well over a kilo-yahren of travels, fights, lives, deaths. Ghosts of ancestors and heroes, ghosts of friends and enemies, ghosts of thousands — yet still ghosts. Only one female tech broke the silence, the faint popping of her gum punctuating the soft staccato of the keys of her computer console as she typed.

"Another letter home?" wondered the Commander. Or maybe it was a wish-list of the parts and supplies they so badly needed and would never be issued. Stolen battlecruisers were not at the top of the Fleet's supply lists. He wandered over to the tech's console.

"...and then ripped the air seals from her well-filled command suit. Struggling against his savage embrace, the voluptuous tech pleaded with her assailant, the love-maddened Commander. 'No! No!' she whimpered, half into the arms of ecstasy. 'Not during a Cylon attack, Commander!' But he continued his own attack, grasping her heaving..."

The Commander retreated as silently as he had arrived, slightly appalled. So that was what Lieutenant Duesseldorf did in her civilian life. Entertainment writer. Or something. Hmmm...

He began to drift back toward the tech, then happened to glance out the command port at the unlimited vista of scintillant, surging stars. Surging?

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"Frak!" he muttered, and turned to the com on his command dais. "Engineering? Engineering!"

"Aye, sirrr. Whott would ye be a-wantin' noo?" burred back the soft Highlands voice of his Chief Engineer. His only real engineer.

"Can't you correct that pulse in the main drives, engineer? Half the ship's crew is calling in with nausea attacks."

"Well, I tol' ye, sirrr. Ye shouldna' ha' done that to me engines."

"Commander Redfurn, if I had 'na ha' done that to you're engines, you wouldn't 'ha had' any engines to be done with! Those Cylons weren't at all friendly."

"Aye, sirrr. Maybe so. But we canna repair the wee beasties wi'oot a full refittin' -- an' that, we air not aboot ta receive. I think the Fleet maybe will be wantin' ta scrap the ol' DEMENTIA noo e'en more. And wi' us in 'er!" There was a brief silence, then, "Oops! 'Scuse me, skipper. We're aboot ta blow oop!" And with that cheering comment, the com went dead.

Commander Morpheus stared at the com, momentarily expecting one of the auxiliary engines to come smashing through a bulkhead. After a few centons of nothing more exciting than a few gasps and pants from Lieutenant Duesseldorf, Morpheus concluded the engineer had just found a new way to break communications with annoying command authority.

Maybe he shouldn't have let the engineer out of his nice, padded cell...

Oh, well. If not him, then no one. Morpheus settled into his command chair and thought back to that critical battle with the Cylons.

* * * * *

He was escorting a flock of med shuttles from a threatened front area funny farm when a dozen Cylon attack craft appeared from nowhere. His gunners put up a good fight, and the Cylons went down to final flaming defeat -- but then, so did the little corvette's engines. As an ignominious change, the shuttles had been tractor-beamed to the corvette, and they pulled him to the nearest Fleet facility. Zeebkarnf Salvage Base. Somehow, it seemed to the annoyed Commander, it fit.

What didn't fit was the condition of the little asteroid base. The living domes were mostly gone, as were the personnel. Only a few terrified techs could be found cowering in far crevices of the base. And no parts for the corvette. The main buildings and supply shops were molten ruins, and little usable could be found. What really flamed the Commander was the nearly new set of corvette engines he found in one building. Well, half a building. And half a set. The front half.

It was while picking and kicking his way into a remote area of the base that he got the feeling of being watched. Cylons? Nope. None left. His ship had blasted the remains of the attack force while they were blasting him.

Then, what?

He turned to his left and found himself staring at two symmetrical hills all but hidden in the twilight. Hills? With pupils? Staring at him?

By the Lords of Fortran, they looked familiar! He walked toward the ocular hills, and slowly a familiar sight revealed itself.

Two massive command domes like staring eyes. A massive armoured "head." A small-craft bay in the head section, like a large, grinning mouth. A vast lumpy body stretching into the dimness, with monstrous drive housings in place of legs.

Lords of Fortran, a Batrachian-class battlestar! Morpheus went closer. That looked exactly like the SHUGGOTH, his small world's own battlestar! An ancient ship, older than anything else flying in the human-Cylon wars. An early exploration craft, it had been fitted out with armaments to lead the human forces against the robotic enemy. Later supplanted by the ATLANTIA series of battlestars, the SHUGGOTH and her sisters were still larger, and heavily formidable. Yahren after yahren, they'd fought -- and died. Now only the SHUGGOTH was left. And this wreck, consigned to salvage.

Wait! He moved even closer. That scar on the landing bay's "chin" -- it looked exactly like the dent made by Great Uncle (four times removed, once forcibly) Meep when he just slightly missed his last landing. And that splotch of metal where the shuttle of one rash Imperious Leader splashed after being caught in deep space by the SHUGGOTH. And the pits left by his escort. Pity the reactors powering the SHUGGOTH's cannon had been out at the time. Ramming with a battlestar... Well, it'd worked...

But what was the last of the Batrachian class doing here?

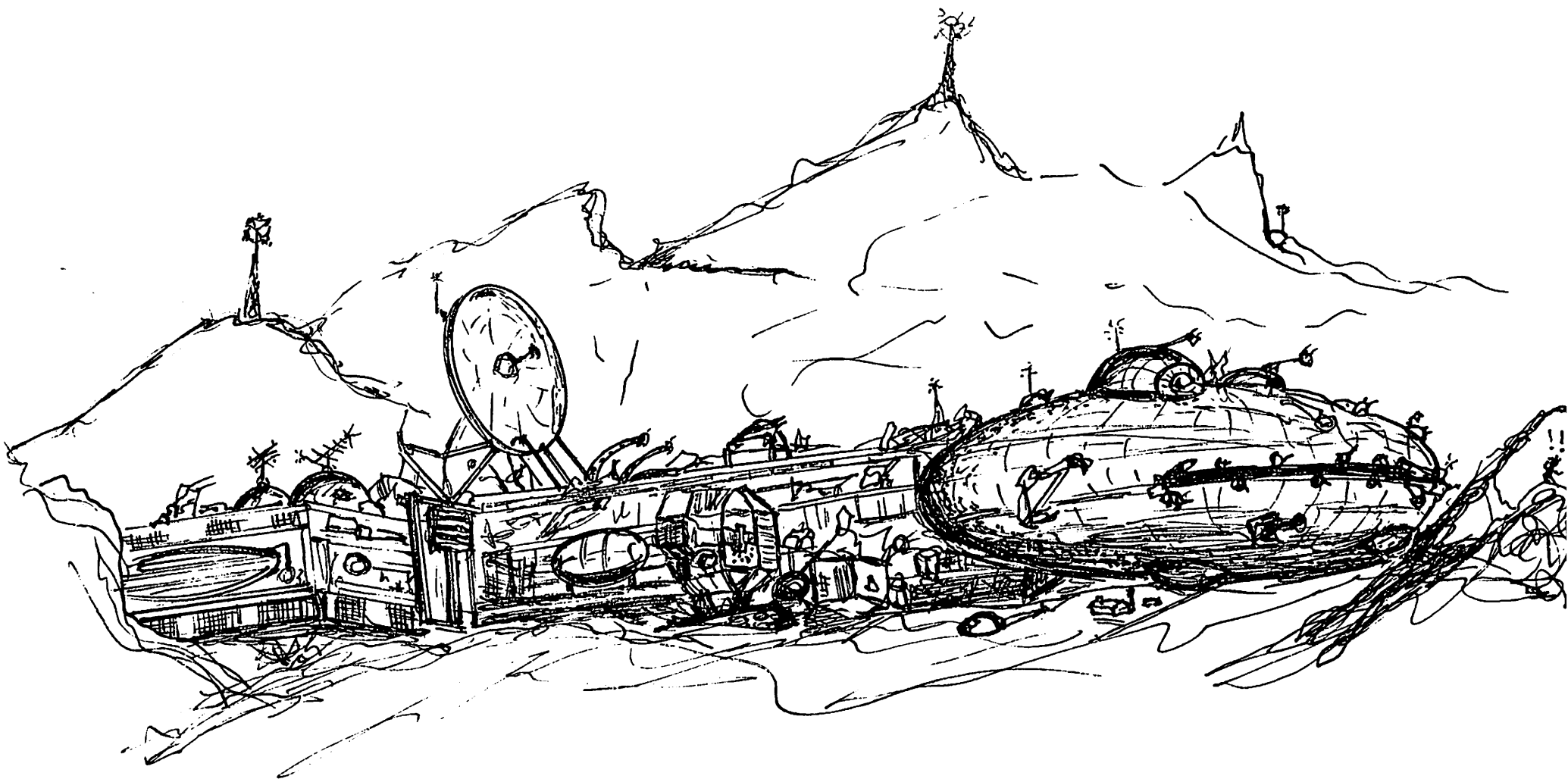
Morpheus found the answer in the base records. After a seeming eternity of service, this ancient hulk was consigned to provide the hull metal for a new battlestar. No parts were available for its major components, and hadn't been for the last generation. And Sire Uri of the Council hated the thing. Ugly, he called it.

Now it was here to be scrapped. Really? Morpheus smiled to himself. A slightly mad plan was forming in his mind...

As it turned out, the hardest part was convincing the med techs in charge of the shuttles. Half the occupants under their care were too blasted old for active duty and were, in fact, from a retirement home. The other half...

Morpheus woke from his reverie, looked at his young lieutenant, and thought of the Chief Engineer and his peers on the staff. The rest of the patients were from a "Section 13" rest and recuperation facility. Nut cases. Fine Warriors and staff officers -- but driven a little nutso by the pressures of war. And now faced with flight back to civilised areas either unprotected by the now-defunct corvette, or...

They did it. Decided to risk their lives crewing an antique hulk of a battlestar back to home space. Decided to rebuild the ship as they went, with all the usable parts left at the salvage base. Decided to tinker together new engines for the corvette, now lodged in the landing bay like a metallic tongue.



Decided to honk together a horde of the old-style "Gnat" interceptors from the stock of parts still residing in the ship's repair shops.

And, finally, decided to rechristen the ship. The old SHUGGOTH was officially dead. Off the records. Gone. Morpheus took one look at the prospective crew surrounding him in the cavern of the landing bay and unhesitatingly programmed the repair 'droids (both of them) to paint the new name on the hull.

"I christen thee 'DEMENTIA,'" he proclaimed.

For some odd reason, the entire crew cheered — except the med techs, who just groaned.

* * * * *

"Sir? Excuse me, sir?" The insistent voice slowly broke through Morpheus's snoozing reverie. "Commander? Sir? Honey?"

What? Morpheus pried one eye open and looked up at the dissheveled tech looming over him, bosom heaving like an ocean in a storm. Fighting off seasickness, he struggled to a more upright position. The command chairs were designed for long residence and battle sleep. "Yes, Lieutenant?" he muttered.

Wrong comment. The Lieutenant heaved once more and slid into his lap. "Commander," she breathed huskily, "we're under attack." Then she went for his throat with her rosebud lips.

"I gotta be dreaming," thought Morpheus to himself. He began to stroke the sensuous tech's back, deciding to make the most of a good dream, and noticed a spot of light growing in the command port. A Cylon-shaped spot — firing as it flickered by. "Odd dream," he thought to himself. Then the command deck went "twang," and he and the lieutenant found themselves floating toward the ceiling with the dying hum of the gravs all around them.

"Dream? Hades!" Morpheus came out of his reverie, launched himself toward the emergency control console — using the fluttering lieutenant for leverage — and hit the E-SYST/OVERRIDE button.

All over the DEMENTIA, long-forgotten emergency systems hummed to life. They had been so little used in past centuries that they were still in like-new shape. Self-repairing automatics took over for the long-vanished battle crew, and myriads of laser turrets burped, hummed, and swung into action. Blasts of deadly light began coursing from the bunkers placed around the grinning landing bay. Gouts of energy bled forth from the ancient fusion gun turrets in the engine pods, and the emergency photon drive at the rear of the lumpy hull began pulsating to devastating life, vapourising a flight of Cylons turning for another attack run on what had seemed to be an unarmed hulk.

In the almost empty crew quarters, horns blared to life. Very old Warriors, who'd thought their lives behind them, thrilled to the call to battle. Lethargic younger men, driven to madness by such calls, started out of their dreams of home and relative peace. Battle? It wasn't fair! In most of these clouded minds, anger flamed. Brighter than a sun and hotter than death, that anger grew. Together with the ancients, mad young men hurled themselves into

the do-it-yourself Gnats.

In the landing bay, paint scorched and loose debris fluttered as hulking masses of the most ugly interceptors ever conceived by the mind of man disdained the launch tubes -- most of which were inoperative anyway -- and blasted at fractional light speed through the landing hatch.

The wave of Cylons closing on the old hulk of what their battlebooks said was an obsolete heap of rust and junk were briefly surprised at the lumps of adamantine steel hurtling at them; then they were dead. The raving fusion cannon of the Gnats continued to fire a bit longer, as the old and the mad took out their wrath on the poor hapless metal-heads. Then the fire ceased, and the fleet of lumpish objects turned as one to the larger battle raging in the heavens ahead of them.

Morpheus stood on the bridge, operating his ship's manual flight controls and following his flock of wayward madmen toward the fighting. He brought the main screens to life and watched several remaining Cylons splatter themselves against the shields. Maniacal laughter wafted from one side, as the battle tech happily played her hands over the console of the fusion cannon on the DEMENTIA's chin. Star-spanning goutts of light leaped forth from the turrets and, vast distances away, tore the attacking Cylons to shreds.

Too late.

Morpheus and the tech watched, as did the crew of the mad flight, as first the ATLANTIA and then the rest of the fleet of proud battlestars flared and died. All but the GALACTICA, who vanished during the fight.

The main battle was long over when the DEMENTIA galumphed into the area. The Gnats were still pursuing and munching distraught Cylons. Med shuttles were retrieving injured and dying. The vaguely-operating remains of Vipers were being pulled into the gaping landing bay, where their occupants were extracted and sent either to quarters or to sickbay -- or for interment. Far too many of the latter, thought Morpheus. Far, far too many. The undamaged Vipers were already gone, apparently fleeing the odd shape of the old DEMENTIA.

"Sir?" came a voice from behind him.

Morpheus turned from the main view port, unconsciously framing himself in a halo of stars and death. "What?"

"Sir, one of the survivors wants to see you."

"Why?" he asked. Then, "Fine, show him in. Or her, them, or whatever."

The survivor was young, injured, and worried. "Sir, what is this thing? It came out of nowhere. Those things acting like fighters can't be stopped, and this thing looks like something out of a nightmare. Sir?"

The young man wavered and fell. Morpheus picked him up and slung him into a chair once used by one of the kill-crazed geriatric cases still mopping up Cylons. "We used to be a battlestar. The SHUGGOTH, from the early yahrens. We became uneconomical to operate, and the Council ordered us broken up for scrap

metal. Yahrens ago. This 'thing' was found by survivors and made operable, and we tried to go home."

Behind Morpheus, the intraship scanners were showing the death of their home worlds. "But we can't go home. We can't, and you can't. We're stuck. Or maybe we can follow that last battlestar, the GALACTICA, I think, and pick up survivors from bases and other ships. We, young man, are a ghost. A ghost of the past making dusty pawprints in the present."

Heading where?

Morpheus turned from the injured Warrior, surveyed the carnage, the hulking Gnats -- eight times the size of a Viper -- picking up human remains and Cylon spare parts, and wondered about the future. The charred young man -- Zac something-or-other -- would be healed and given a place on the old relic. The other survivors here and from the Colonies would seek a new home...

Where? Somewhere... Morpheus remembered a few old legends... Meanwhile, the Gnats were moving to salvage the new asteroid field that had once been a proud fleet. They needed just about everything... Especially a new home.

"By...your...command." Thunk. Morpheus turned slowly, surreptitiously hauling out the laser at his side.

The Chief Engineer, his uniform glittering metalically, stood behind him, looming over an obviously defunct Cylon.

"Hi, boss. Guess whott me an' the boys found?"

"Canned tuna?" the Commander shot back sarcastically.

"Noo, sirrr, sure an' that isna' called fer. We jist found this wee canned critter wand'rin' aroond in space, his mind erased by that fusion cannon yon lassie is so fond of. We got us a whole passel o' the things. An' guess whott?" He paused conspiratorially. "I think I c'n r'program the beasties. I got me an engineerin' crew agin!" He crowed happily. "Sure, an' they aut ta be good wi' engines, bein' ones theirselves." Still chuckling, the engineer easily slung the massive but snoozing Cylon over his broad shoulders and stomped happily off toward the bowels of the ship.

"Cute, Redfurn. Real cute," the Commander muttered. "Now we'll have to program our guns to not shoot our tame Cylons, but to nail the hostiles. Know your enemy." A vision of two Cylons, identical, standing beside each other, one labeled "ours," the other labeled "theirs," floated through his mind. It was horrible.

He stood frozen before the main port as something slid up his back, then over his shoulder, and something began nibbling his ear.

"Oh, Commander," the battle tech breathed heavily, as the hatch slid downward, sealing them -- alone -- in the command dome. "Oh, Commander!" And slowly, he turned...

What a way to run a starship, he thought, yielding to the inevitable.



John
Hawke
Hawke 88

LYRA'S LOG

(Personal and Confidential)

Unfortunately, Diana saw Arion leaving my quarters. When she came for me on her way to the ready room in the morning, she couldn't resist teasing me. I have never been very good at accepting teasing, I'm afraid.

I kept my mouth shut all the way to the ready room. I was really feeling pretty proud of myself. I hadn't given her a response to feel smug about.

She kept it up and kept it up, however, even after we reached the ready room and there were other ears to hear what she was saying. I don't care if they were listening or not -- they were there.

She had to throw one last zinger. "Picking them a little young, aren't you, Colonel? Are you afraid to play with the big boys? Or do you just like children?"

That did it. I couldn't stand another dart, so I tossed one of my own.

"At least we don't have to sneak around like you and Apollo did."

I never saw such a look of shock and fury in my whole life. That little witch picked up a mug from the table and threw it at me for all she was worth. What's more, she almost caught me with it, too.

I have always believed that a good defence is a good offence, so I retaliated in kind. The battle was joined. We fired anything loose we could get our hands on.

The other pilots backed away. They probably thought we had lost our minds. Arion got stuck in a corner, and I think he got the worst of our argument. Every missile that missed seemed to head toward him. When another mug meant for me just missed his ear, he yelled toward the door, "Hey! Pandora! Get help! Call Security! Quick! They're gonna kill each other!" He ducked a flight helmet. "Or me!"

I started to laugh. That "or me" sounded so woebegone I couldn't help it. Diana started laughing, too. Before we knew it, we were holding each other up, we were laughing so hard.

I glanced over at Arion, who was still standing in the corner. He was shaking his head and mumbling, "I thought they were crazy before. Now I know they're crazy!"

I suppose we are. We have to be.

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ARION'S JOURNAL

(Personal entry -- Voice coded.)

I guess Diana did suspect.

A little while ago, I was talking to Pandora in the ready room, and who should walk in but Ly ... uh, the Colonel, and her crazy red-headed Captain.

I immediately tuned in to what they were saying, and heard Diana say something like, "You can't play with the big boys, huh? You like them young..."

Did my ears burn!

The Colonel didn't like it much, either. She said something about someone named Apollo (I just can't seem to place the name!), and then, before my eyes, I saw the impossible become possible.

They started fighting!

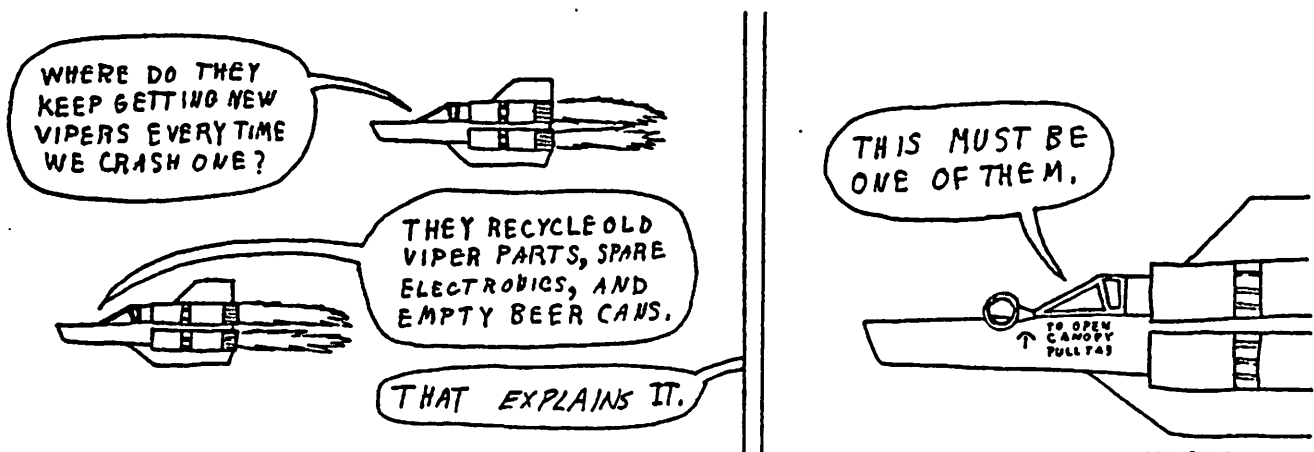
Two officers started fighting! They were throwing things! Only they weren't hitting each other -- they were hitting me!

Finally, when that screaming red demon threw a glass in my direction and a piece hit my ear, I couldn't stand it any longer. I yelled, "Hey! Pandora! Get help! Call Security! Quick! They're gonna kill each other! Or me!"

Then a strange thing happened. The hurricane stopped. And they both started laughing. And laughing. And laughing. I was going to have Pandora call Life Centre, because I thought for sure they had gone crazy. I mean, I thought they were crazy before!

But now, I have to smile. Can you imagine how boring life would be without them?

Maybe I'm crazy, too.



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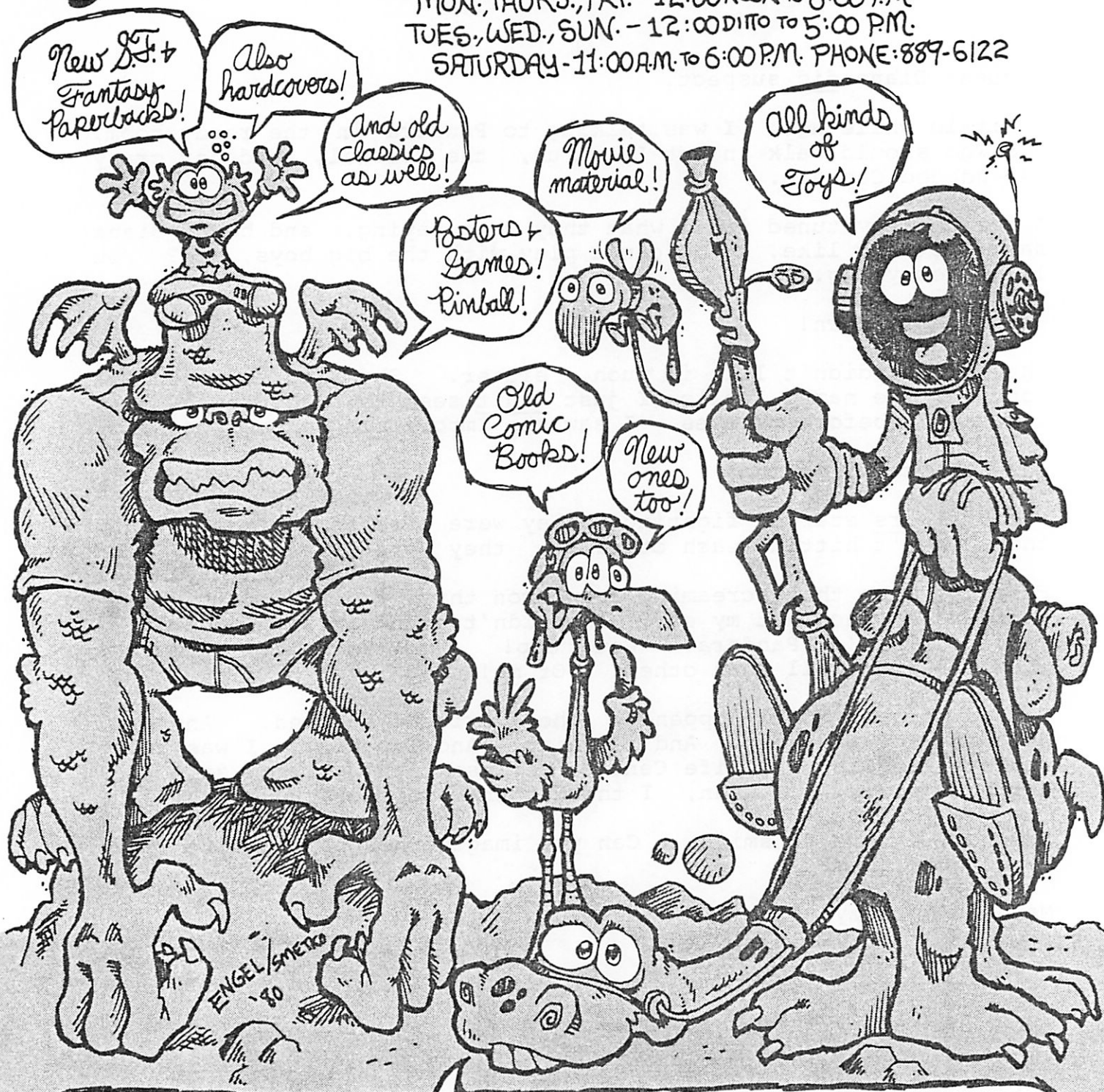
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DIANA'S JOURNAL

(Personal entry -- Voice code retrieval only.)

That little devil Arion! I have to admit I was a bit surprised to see him leaving Lyra's quarters last night. It was late -- extremely late -- and he looked just a bit, well, ruffled. And pleased with himself, too. I wonder who seduced whom...

Anyway, I couldn't resist teasing the Colonel. After all, she's the one who's forever saying she prefers "men, not boys." And Arion is just a bit younger than the average aboard the OSIRIS -- a nice kid, but young.

Lyra was in a foul mood. Really foul. All the way to the ready room, she didn't say a single word, just looked grim. And, like I said, I couldn't resist teasing her. So when she threw that line about Apollo at me...

How in Hades could she know about Apollo and me? She shouldn't even know his name, let alone of any tie between us. True, our relationship was pretty generally known among the cadets, once Starbuck found out. There was never any reason to keep it a secret. But, then, none of the cadets knew who my family was. And no one on the teaching staff would have had any interest in cadet relationships.

Besides, if Lyra knows who Apollo is, then she must know all the rest. Everyone at the Academy knew Apollo was Commander Adama's son. He certainly never tried to hide it; he was always proud of his father. And if Lyra knows that, and remembers some of the things I told her...

I think all of that flashed through my mind in the micron following Lyra's verbal dart. I was furious. Really furious. And when I get that angry, I throw things. I grabbed the first thing that came within reach and hurled it with all my strength.

As usual when I'm angry, I didn't aim first. Lyra ducked, and the mug slammed into the wall behind her, just missing her -- and spattering Arion with ale.

Well, Lyra retaliated with an empty bottle. We were both throwing anything and everything throwable, screaming imprecations and calling each other names. ("Witch," am I?)

The other pilots stayed out of it. I think they were all a little afraid we'd turn on them next. Besides, one generally does not interfere with a senior officer. Even when one thinks that officer has lost his -- or her -- mind. Maybe especially then...



Poor Arion. He was in a sense the cause of it all -- and I think he got the worst of our fight. He was sort of trapped in a corner, and somehow everything we threw seemed to head straight for him. At the time, I was far too angry to care. But he is kind of sweet, and I really wouldn't want to see him hurt, at least not in such a silly argument.

When the last mug (we were about out of ammunition) shattered against the wall just over his head -- and a piece of it nicked his ear! -- Arion yelled across the ready room to Lieutenant Pandora, who was watching the fracas from near the hatch, ready for a quick exit if necessary. "Hey, Pandora! Get help! Call Security! Quick! They're gonna kill each other! Or me!"

That "or me" did it. He sounded so much like Starbuck... I started laughing; so did Lyra. Soon we were laughing so hard we were in tears.

Arion thinks we're crazy. Maybe he's right. That's how we all survive...

And then someone -- I wish I knew whom -- reported the whole mess to Colonel Tyr. Lyra and I had to stand and listen to him thunder on and on and on about military discipline -- for the better part of half a centar. We'd better not cross him. Not for a while, at least.

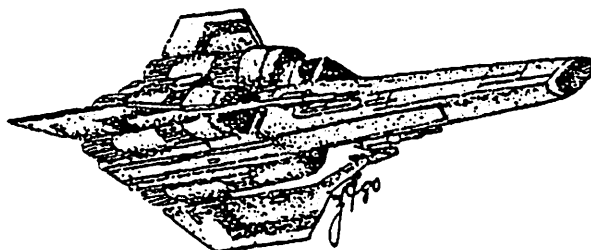
Somehow, I can't manage to feel guilty. Just human. And, I think, a little more vulnerable than usual. It's not a feeling I particularly like.

I would quite cheerfully have terminated Lyra, though. Sneaking through old records, snooping and prying into things that are none of her affair, things she has no need -- no right! -- to know...

Oh, frak! I'm still angry -- and I guess a little afraid, too. I never wanted anyone aboard the OSIRIS to know about my connection with the Commander. It's bad enough that some of them knew Apollo and me at the Academy, though none of them is likely to say anything to Lyra or anyone else. Now...

Well, I can't undo the past. But I will have to be more careful in the future.

Still, I really wish I knew how Lyra found out. And just exactly how much she does know...



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ED. NOTE: The preceeding contest announcement was accompanied by the following threat, submitted in the Humour Editor's own handwriting. She is known to be dangerous and unstable. Therefore, we can only assume she means it.

WARNING!! I excepted myself from the last contest, but this time I reserve the right to interfere. If things get slow here in OSIRISland, I just might enter my version, a musical western on Dune in which Athena is mistaken for a Bene Gesserit and fed to a sandworm. (Yes, she remains intact and unharmed; it's my contest.) Among the production numbers:

Yippie Ki Yi Oh!
Git inside, lil' Athena.
You know that a sandworm
Will be your new home.

And the strange, haunting:

I walk the sands near thumper stands
And scan the land for sandworms,
Big, mean sandworms.

ED. NOTE: Needless to say, we urge our readers to submit as many entries as possible, lest our Humour Editor take things into her own hands.

ALEXANDRA

Sharon Monroe



"Alexandra"

(By Sharon Monroe)

This is Flight Sergeant Alexandra, Colonial Warrior and Viper pilot in Purple Squadron aboard the battlestar OSIRIS. I'm also a Cultural Survey tech, second class, specialising in history and archaeology. We each need to fill as many functions as possible on an exploration mission.

Physically, I'm about average. My eyes are brown. My hair is brown and shoulder-length, with just enough wave to make it unmanageable. My features have often been called pretty, but I'm the first to admit I'm no beauty.

Until I reached the Academy, I thought I was fairly intelligent. Anyplace but there, I guess I am. There, I was about average.

To be honest, I'm so damned average, I sometimes want to scream. Everybody wants to excel at something, but I seem to be merely good at everything.

Now that someone might be able to pick me out of a crowd, who am I?

I may as well start this journal with a little history of myself. That way, someone hearing this in 200 yahrens and looking for great perceptions on humanity won't be too disillusioned by just how unspectacular this journal is likely to be. Especially if the creator gets herself killed on some stupid mission along the way. History is so much more difficult when you have nothing but bare facts, with no knowledge of the mental processes of the beings creating that history.

I was born in Scheadar, a small community not far from Caprica City. I grew up with all the advantages of being near the hub of our world, as well as all the advantages of small-town living. So I was exposed to a lot of different facets of the human environment. So what?

My father was a minor politician, one of the kind so common everywhere in the Colonies. He was a strong believer in things like limited government intervention in people's lives, and lots of local autonomy. I suspect some of this came from the touch of larceny in his soul. His little side dealings were never anything dangerous or serious, that I was aware of. He just had a passion for the exotic, the ancient, and the artistic, and this was the best way he knew to satisfy it. Actually, he simply trod the grey area between the legal and the not-quite-ethical.

My mother, on the other hand, was scrupulously honest. She was a

Colonial Warrior before she met my father, from the planet Virgon. She came to Caprica to investigate some minor theft or other. Somehow, she and my father met and started corresponding. After a few yahrens, she left the Service, and they were sealed. She worked in the Caprica City Museum of Ancient History. I suppose that's where my interest came from. Her greatest legacy to me was her love of the past.

I was the oldest of three sisters. Acantha and Amythyst were twins, six yahrens younger than I. They were really too young to be much more than a nuisance most of my life. We had a brother, too, but he died very young, and I don't remember more than a screaming infant. Most of my friends were neighbours and classmates.

Both my parents encouraged us to learn as much as we could. Some of the best times I can remember are those when I was allowed to "help" my parents at their jobs. My father didn't seem to mind how much prying I did into his affairs, so long as I knew when to keep my mouth shut. I learned silence can be golden the first time I tried the same thing on my Uncle Uri. He didn't appreciate my snooping into his personal files. He never did learn how I got to them. So much the better for me. As it was, he had me convinced I was going to be dragged from my house in the dead of night for everything from breaking and entering, to political manipulating, to being an accessory. I really didn't think what I'd done was that bad, but after that, I was very cautious.

Handling some of the oldest artifacts in the Museum was quite a thrill, I remember. My mother also let me prowl around in the back workrooms and storage closets. Looking back, I probably learned more from my snooping and prowling than from my homework. And I seem to recall a lot of homework left undone.

Until I entered the Caprican Military Academy, of course.

About the time I was leaving for the Academy, my parents decided to move to Virgon. My mother finally acknowledged herself homesick, and my father decided his brother would make the perfect guardian for a young hooligan whose idea of being circumspect was to not get caught. I learned a lot about politics and politicians, and I wasn't too eager to have Uncle Uri watching me, but my parents wanted it. I guess he wasn't too eager to keep a watchful eye on me, either, but something convinced him. Perhaps the fact that he didn't want a family scandal hurting his career -- and he saw one coming if I was left to my own devices. (And I knew a lot of them!) So my father's "little girl" was not left alone.

My uncle's watchful eye lasted for about one section. Then he had better things to do. So I decided to keep my eye on Uncle Uri, just in case I ever needed anything -- like a favour, or information, or a helping hand.

I enjoyed my yahrens at the Academy, even if they were among the

toughest yahrens in my life. I actually had to work to learn things and to keep up. I was beginning to discover my true potential.

Besides expanding my mind and giving me more aches than I care to remember, I learned there were ways to get around just about everybody and everything. It was almost a game, relief from constant studying and workouts. I even thought about a career in politics for a time, but squelched that notion by taking a second look at my dear uncle. Somehow, the life he led was just not for me.

The only real problem I had with my little games was once in my third yahren, when I ran up against the greatest con man the Academy ever had the misfortune to enroll. That fiasco is not worth recalling here. Maybe later, if I get totally bored with life on a lonely battlestar.

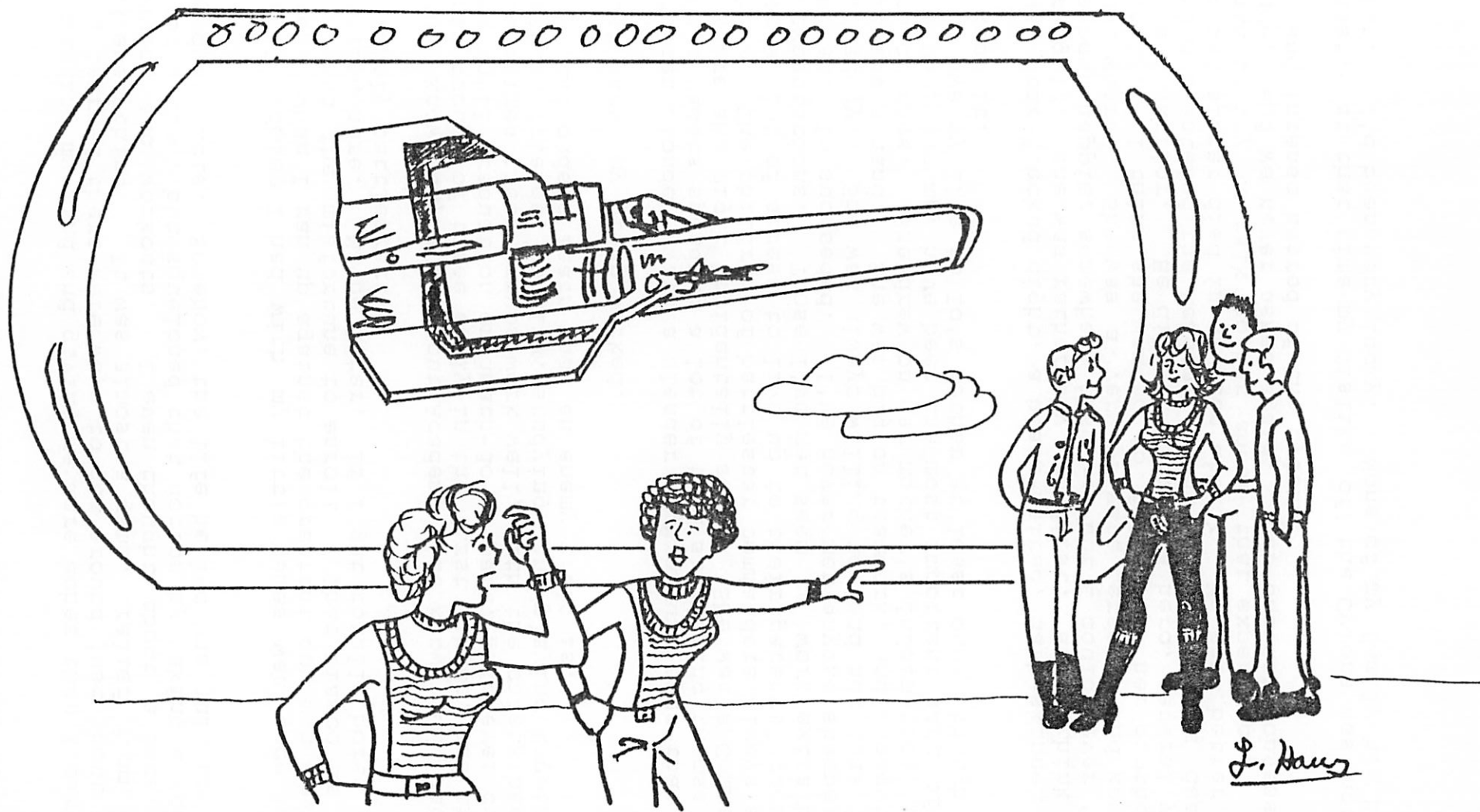
Everyone who knows anything about Academy life knows all cadets are put into groups of three early in the first yahren, and these threes last until graduation or death-do-us-part, whichever comes first. Sometimes these groups work well, with the cadets becoming the best of friends, working, studying, and playing together. Other times, the cadets learn what an enemy truly is.

For the most part, my group worked.

Io was a golden blonde, with a slender figure and eyes that had half the male cadets spending a lot of time stationing themselves at places where she might accidentally stop. She was a Commander's daughter. The children of battlestar commanders always seem to be under a lot of stress to live up to their parents' reputations and expectations. Those I've met seem to work extra hard at being great. Io succeeded. I've never met anyone sharper at military strategy. She was always willing to lend her less fortunate partners a hand. She was big on teamwork, and she got me through the courses. She drew on her mother's information, too, and that experience may have been the most important part of my learning. I owe my life to Io's mother at least once, though she may never know it.

Melantha was star-flecked night, a black-haired, dark-skinned siren. Strangely, she was rather shy at first, and I think she would have been happier somewhere else -- but I could never figure out just where. She was a very private person, and kept a lot to herself. I think she wanted to follow in her brother's footsteps as a Warrior. He died in battle, a hero, several yahrens before Mel entered the Academy. Not long after his death, her mother and sister died in a Cylon attack. We knew better, Io and I, than to try to talk to her about that experience. Mel told us once, and we never asked again. Her one dark obsession was a deep and intense hatred of the Cylons.

To be honest, at that time my dislike of the Cylons was not a real emotion. I'd been very lucky. None of my family had been



J. Haus

lost to them, and my home was unscathed in several raids. But until I met Melantha and Io, I guess Cylons just weren't quite real to me. I was more curious about them than anything else.

So why did I become a Warrior? I think it was more from noble sentiments about defending my family and country, protecting my worlds -- and probably a bit of thought about what good it might do in some far-off political campaign to be able to say I'd been a Warrior. Fighting and dying weren't quite real.

Io was a lot more realistic. She wasn't an idealist or politician. She didn't have any inner fire with a need to burn itself on hatred. She knew the Cylons as the enemy. She knew how they worked. She understood the reasons for the fighting, and accepted the need to fight and maybe die. Death was something she was familiar with. She could deal with it.

Death was real for Melantha, too. You need to understand death before you can understand and face hatred.

It was only a few sections before graduation. We were all ecstatic about getting away from the Academy after what seemed like eons, and getting out into the real galaxy. We'd each received our orders. Io was going to her mother's battlestar, while Melantha was being sent to the GALACTICA. I was assigned to the SOLARIA. I remember days spent talking about all the great deeds we would do, and how we'd never forget each other. We had so many reunions planned, there wouldn't have been time for them all in our three lifetimes.

Then Uncle Uri heard from my parents. My entire family was coming from Virgon for the graduation ceremonies. Then a whirlwind tour of the Colonies for a newly-made Warrior who'd seen them only from the cockpit of her Viper. It sounded wonderful! I'd spend two whole sections with my family before being sent on my first tour of duty.

Graduation day. I knew I'd be busy all day, so my parents were going to meet me after I became a full-fledged Warrior. The three of us -- Io, Mel, and I -- were dashing about madly. Io's mother was one of the officials in charge that day, and Io was so nervous, it was contagious. Melantha was probably the calmest of us all as we got ready, dressing in formal blue uniforms that would be perfect as soon as we got our insignia.

The day was hot. We were all itchy and sweaty, hoping we didn't look too nervous and wouldn't do something disgraceful to our new status -- like fainting in front of the commanders. We carried it off beautifully. Melantha managed a cheeky grin for one instructor who'd been giving her grief for a long time, and he even smiled back. Io looked as cool as I've ever seen her. Me? I fidgeted.

I was nervous afterward, too, when my parents and sisters weren't at our arranged meeting place. I hoped it was nothing serious,

just a matter of their getting lost in the crowds. Then I got a call over the amplifier system, ordering me to report to some office or other.

The officer on duty was someone I knew. Nestor had been an instructor in one of my first classes, and for some reason, I'd run into him frequently -- as well as having several run-ins with his office. He was my favourite instructor. Which is probably why he was the one to tell me.

I can't remember his exact words, but I'll never forget the sympathy, the pure sorrow in his grey eyes. He held my hand and made me sit down. I think I screamed at him to tell me what was wrong.

My parents had never reached Caprica. They never would. Their ship was ambushed by a Cylon patrol; it exploded before help could arrive. There were no survivors.

Everything went blank, except for two grey eyes at the end of a long void. Then I got up, said, "Thank you," and left. Nestor followed me. I reached Mel and Io before I collapsed completely.

What a way for a Warrior to react! It was my first real contact with death, and I couldn't take it. I wondered for a while what I was doing wearing a Warrior's insignia.

When I came back to sanity after two days of blackness, Uncle Uri was talking to me, telling me he'd take good care of me. Somehow, his voice and what he was saying seemed utterly ridiculous. Why should he have to take care of me? I was a Warrior! And I was going to avenge the four people who'd meant more to me than anybody else. I laughed in his face.

I've never had any leanings toward politics since then.

The doctors released me after a couple of psych tests, and I discovered my uncle had gotten my assignment to the SOLARIA dropped. I'm not really sure what he thought that would accomplish. Did he think I was going to spend my life being an instructor, or a perpetual student? He delicately mentioned I'd at one time expressed an interest in working with him as an aide, and he could easily arrange an honourable medical discharge from the Service.

No way! I was a Warrior. I had a job to do, and people who depended on me. I had a goal, too -- to get rid of as many Cylons as I could. I wasn't going to be planet-bound. I felt as fanatical as Mel must have been when she first entered the Academy.

The doctors must have seen this, because I wasn't reassigned anywhere for quite a while. I spent some time studying and finally accepted my uncle's offer to go on a tour of the Colonies. But it wasn't what it would have been with my family. I felt terribly frustrated. I needed to go somewhere.

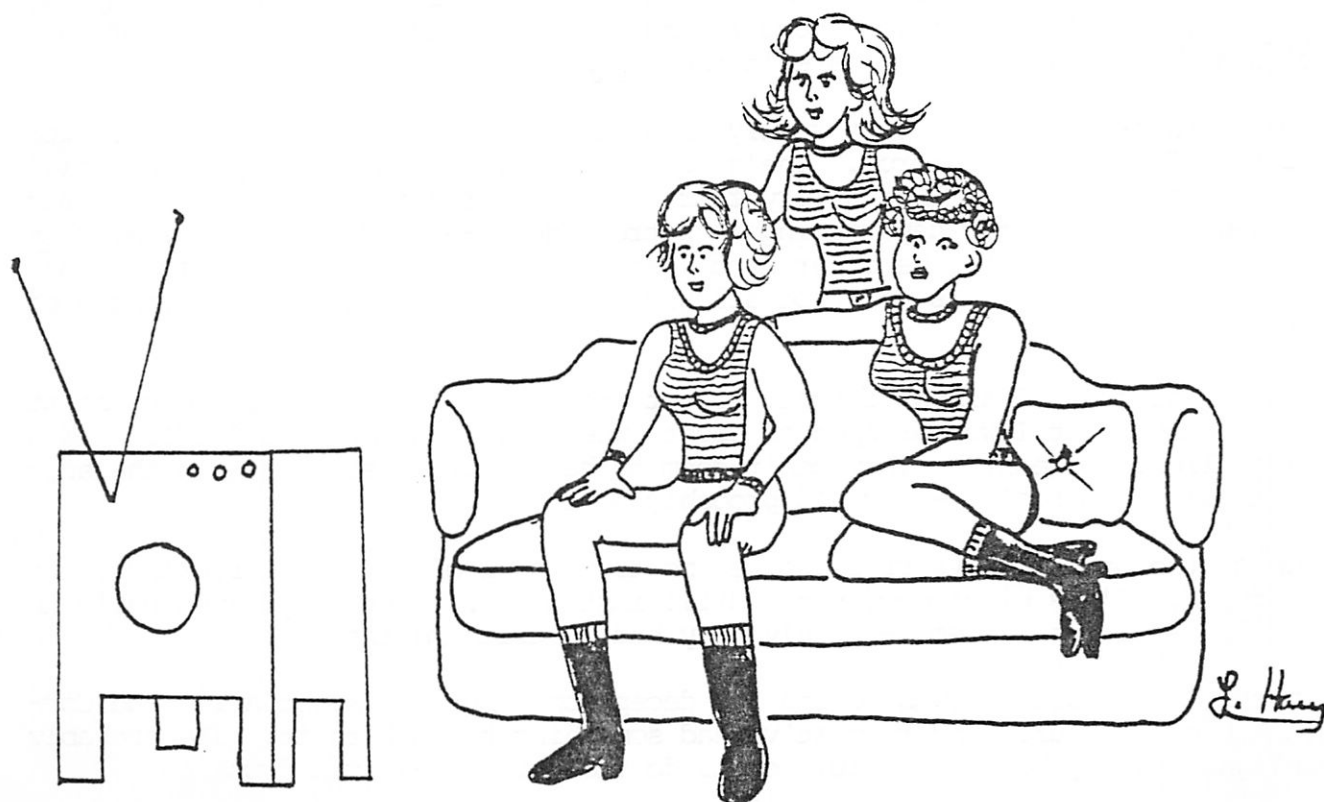
Then Nestor told me about a new mission being planned for the battlestar OSIRIS. She was being sent on a deep space exploration cruise planned to last two yahrens. It sounded interesting. I had nothing to gain by staying where I was. By leaving, I would become part of an exciting, vital, important mission. I had the necessary qualifications. And, to be honest, I had no family ties to hold me. I wanted to go.

I went to Uncle Uri with one last request. Since the crew had already been selected, I knew it would take a little political help to get me aboard. My uncle put his political connections to use, and I worked on a few instructors I knew.

Uncle Uri came through. I was assigned to the OSIRIS scant sections before she was due to depart. It seemed I barely had time to meet my fellow members of Purple Squadron before we were under way.

The only person I thought I might really miss was Nestor. Maybe I was just too afraid of forming any kind of bond the Cylons could break with a simple blast of laser fire. Maybe, if things had been different...

Frak! Red alert. Must be the Cylons again. Gotta go!



MARA'S DIARY

(Personal -- Under voice lock.)

I'm finally getting to know some of the other pilots. Which is not the same as understanding them. I'm not sure I'll ever understand some of them! But at least I'm finally starting to feel a little more at ease. It's a rough situation to come into. The OSIRIS has been out on exploration for several yahrens, and her crew all know each other quite well. The pilots are almost like a family. So any newcomer is going to feel like an outsider.

Fortunately, though, I'm not the only outsider. There were other survivors picked up. One of them's a pilot named Arion. I thought we'd have a lot in common, both being new. But Ariella told me not to get involved with him. That just made me curious, so I kept my eyes open and listened whenever I heard his name mentioned. He's a devious little daggit! He's constantly in trouble for disobeying orders, and he seems to be behind a large number of the practical jokes pulled.

And then there was the fight, which I don't understand at all!

We were all in the ready room waiting for orders when Colonel Lyra walked in, talking to Captain Diana. I was on the far side of the room, so I couldn't hear what was said, but suddenly they were throwing things at each other and at Arion! To further confuse matters, the fight ended in laughter! Why two officers, who I thought were good friends, should attack each other, or what Arion had to do with it, I haven't the slightest idea!

Come to think of it, I don't really know Captain Diana that well, either, for all that I'm in her squadron. She's easy to spot, with that flaming red hair, but not easy to know. She's very fair, and she cares about her pilots. But she bawled me out for daydreaming on patrol once -- and I won't forget that for a long while! On the other hand, she has a small pet named Draco -- and anyone who loves animals can't be all bad. Maybe I'm just a little in awe of her rank.

Speaking of rank, I almost forgot. I got promoted! I was a drill sergeant at the Academy, but I was dropped to cadet when I came aboard the OSIRIS. Now I'm a flight sergeant. They don't seem to have a drill sergeant on the ship -- thank the Lords! -- or I'd probably be it.

Some of the other pilots tried to get me to do some of the drill routines, but I refused. I'm a pilot now, not a drill instructor. But I did eventually do a drill routine for them -- only they had to trick me into it.

I'm still not sure who was behind the deception, but I suspect Arion and Corbin -- and I'm sure Pandora must've had something to do with it. She probably instigated it by betting I could still do the drill -- even drunk.

At any rate, it was certainly a team effort. Some of the pilots invited me to join them for a drink in the Officers' Club. Someone ordered a round, and someone else ordered another, and pretty soon I lost count. Then Corbin came

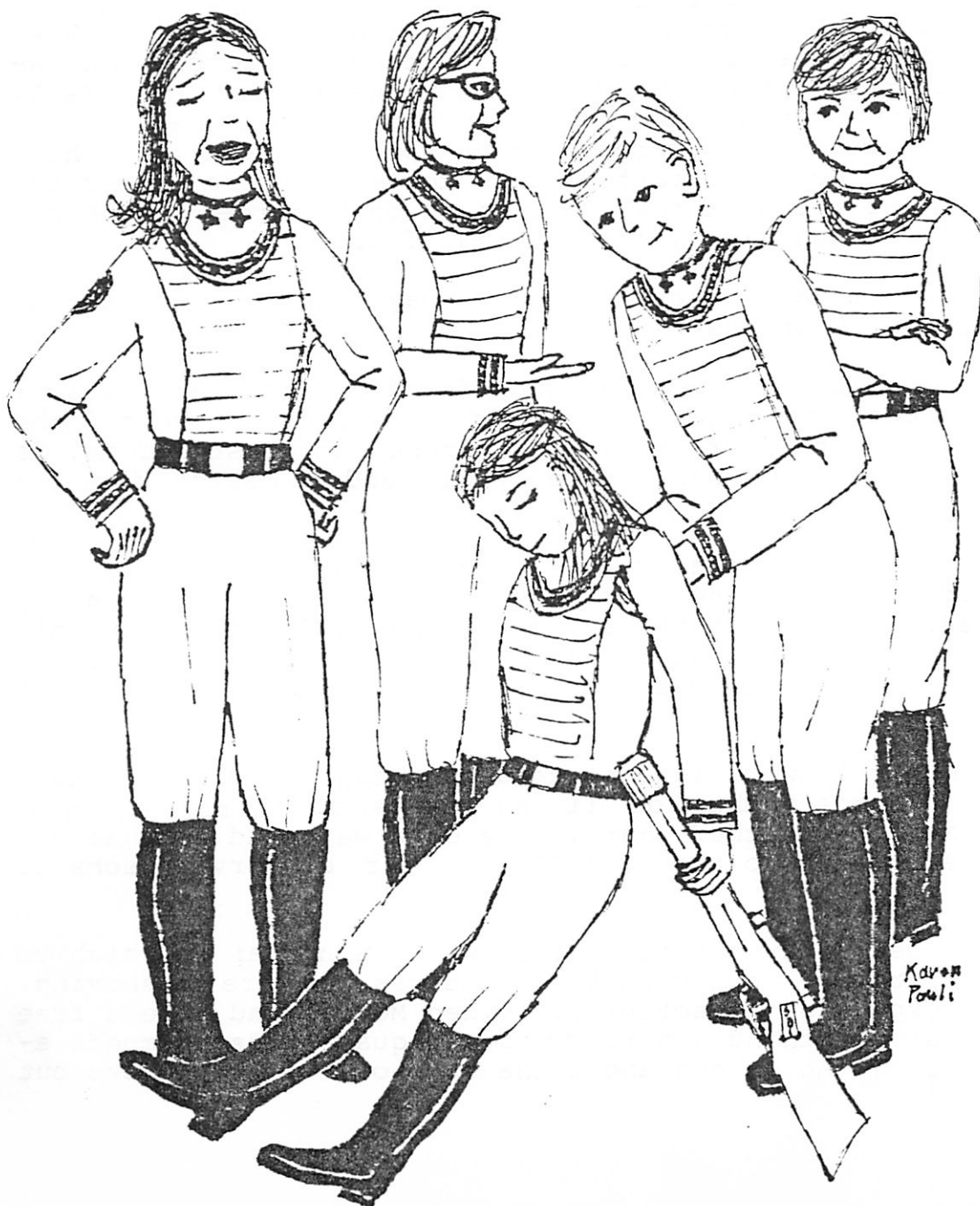
in with a deactivated laser rifle he said he was taking in for repairs. He leaned it against the wall and joined us.

The trap was set. Now for the bait.

Someone picked up the rifle and tried a few drill moves, without success. Someone else said he'd once been on a drill team and thought he could still do the routine. He couldn't. After watching three or four people bungle the drill, I had enough! I got up, rather unsteadily, and said something to the effect of, "Can't you idiots do anything right? This is how it goes!"

I don't remember too clearly what happened, but I'm told I went through the complete drill routine letter-perfect, saluted, then passed out! I woke up in my bunk with a splitting headache -- and the growing realisation I'd been conned.

With friends like these, who needs Cylons?



DIANA'S JOURNAL

(Open entry -- Uncoded.)

The exploratory mission of the OSIRIS lasted yahrens longer than originally expected, and our return to the Colonies was hardly the joyous homecoming we'd anticipated. Our planets in flames, most of our families and friends dead, we nevertheless managed to snatch something from the ruins. We have our lives, our ship, and whatever we could retrieve from our homes, including a considerable addition to our personnel. Most important, we also have hope.

The OSIRIS, like her sister battlestars, was designed as a warship, and originally carried a full four Viper squadrons. When she was refitted for exploration, one of those squadrons was eliminated entirely; the remaining three were only partially staffed, and the overall personnel complement was halved, in spite of the addition of numerous survey specialists. Now, however, the OSIRIS carries better than three-quarters of her intended crew, and although there are still only three squadrons, we have nearly enough Vipers for a normal four.

We are, I think, a match for anything we may encounter, short of a fully-equipped Cylon base star.

We also have a number of luxuries not found on most battlestars, as well as a good many exotic items from worlds out beyond the galactic rim. Most interesting among these, at least for me, is the small creature that has become my pet and a mascot for the entire ship.

One very ordinary day nearly two yahrens ago, I was flying a search pattern over a planet our scouts had discovered only a day or so earlier. Lieutenant Morgan, my wingman and perhaps my only real friend among the men of the OSIRIS crew, spotted something moving and signalled he was going down for a closer look. I followed.

Dense blue and yellow foliage blocked our view of what scanners told us was a large number of living beings of fairly advanced evolution. Morgan recorded what little data we could get, assuming we'd take it back to the OSIRIS for our biosurvey techs to analyse.

Something -- certainly not our ships; we were up far too high to be seen or heard -- panicked the creatures we were observing. There was an explosion of activity. Then Morgan and I were free of the foliage, watching a herd of green quadrupeds stampede across a clearing. An object about the size of a daggit broke out

of the underbrush into the clearing, then launched itself into the air. The quadrupeds circled back, and there was a sudden shriek -- apparently from the flying creature as it dove toward the herd.

Morgan and I watched our scanners as the instruments tried to sort out what was happening. Then both the quadrupeds and the flyer were gone. All that remained was a pair of bodies -- one presumably dead quadruped and one very tiny creature the scanners reported was still alive.

Contrary to standing orders, I landed my Viper in the centre of the clearing. Morgan held a tight pattern above me, ready to assist on a micron's notice. Laser in hand, I went toward the bodies.

The quadruped was unmistakably dead. I was never sure if the flyer had killed it, or if it had simply been trampled by its fellows.

The tiny reptilian creature was alive but badly hurt. It was a pretty little thing, with fine violet scales and iridescent blue, red, and violet wings. I thought it was dying, but I didn't have the heart to destroy it. It lay quietly in the palm of my hand, watching me with bright, unwinking black eyes. After a few microns, it curled its tail tightly around my thumb.

That settled matters. As soon as I was off the ground, I ordered Morgan back to the OSIRIS. When we landed, I took my little friend straight to Life Sciences.

About a section later, a very annoyed senior biosurvey tech ordered me to take my "wretched little beast" out of his lab and never let him see it again. It was disturbing all his other animals, and, as he put it, "It certainly doesn't need me now."

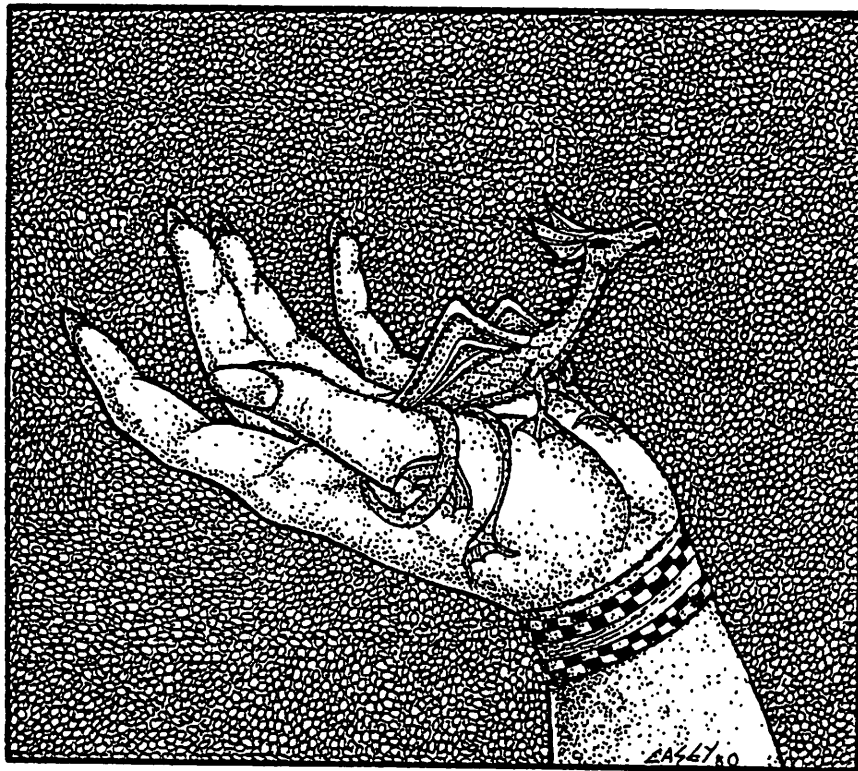
Well, my "wretched little beast" hasn't grown much. It's only about three or four inches long and still likes to sit in the palm of my hand, curling its tail around my thumb for balance, although its favourite perch is my shoulder, where it can hide in my hair and observe the world unnoticed. I call it "Draco" because in appearance it strongly resembles the great dragons of myth -- although my dragon is much, much smaller.

Draco's a vegetarian and doesn't eat much -- and the little creature is very neat and tidy, considerably more so than some of our crew. When my squadron first saw it (Him? Her? No one has yet determined its sex.), they immediately adopted it as their mascot. Not wanting to be left out, Orange and Green Squadrons proclaimed it their mascot as well, despite its colour. Now, everyone on board is familiar with the tiny violet reptile who flies into virtually every corner of the ship at will.

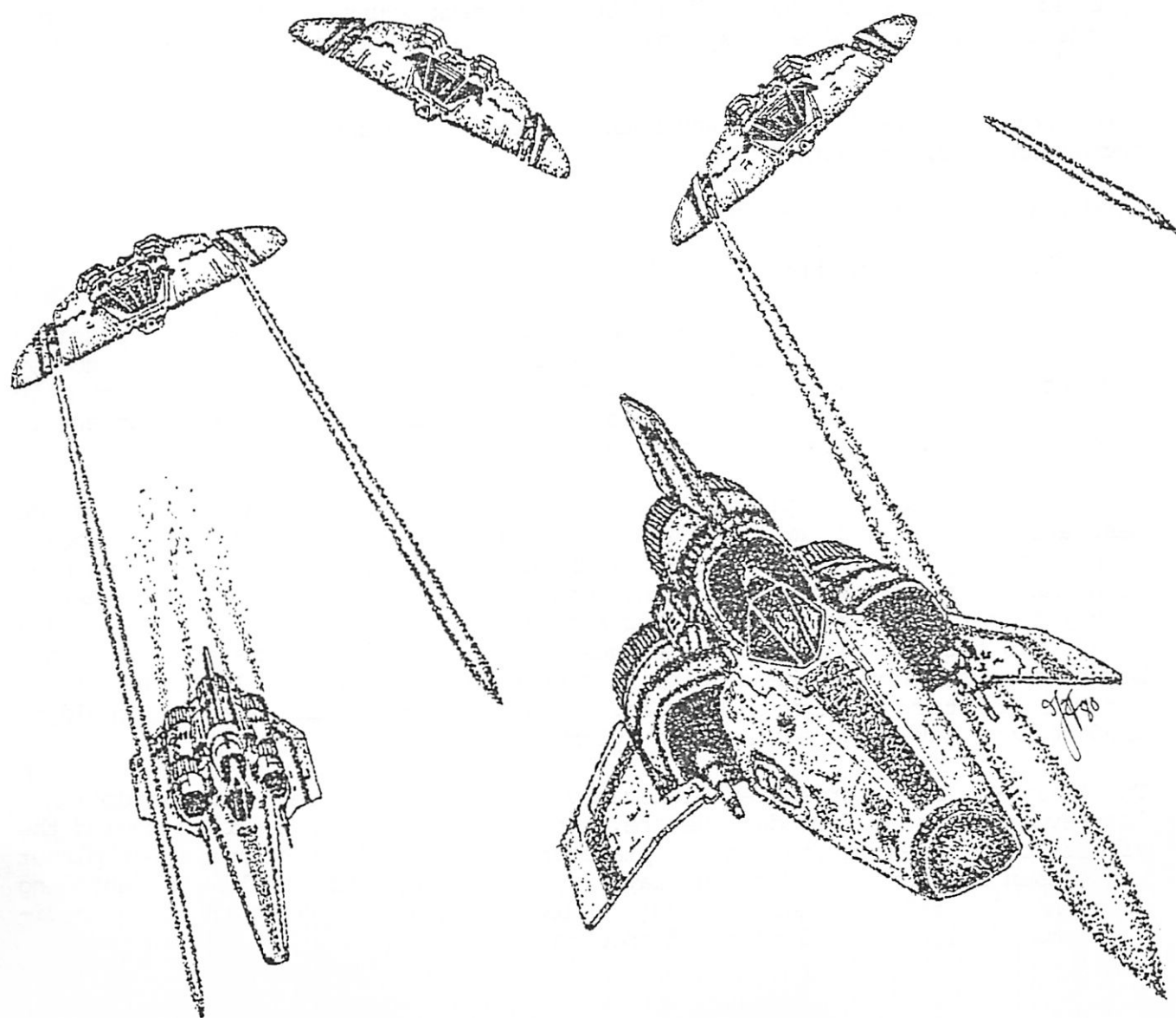
My little pet is gentle, affectionate, and loved by nearly everyone aboard the OSIRIS. After all, it's hard not to respond to a

creature who seems determined to love everyone around it.

Although I seem to recall a certain Colonel who very nearly had a stroke when she learned I'd landed against orders...



THE ULTIMATE WEAPON



"The Ultimate Weapon"

(By David Morgan)

Morgan scowled bleakly at his scanner — and the deadly image it showed. With twenty-eight civilians and only two Vipers as escort, the last thing they needed was a Cylon base star. Fortunately, the survey camp was on the far side of the system's innermost planet; the Cylons couldn't have detected it yet. And as long as they didn't spot him...

He activated his com. "Star Base, this is Viper Two. Diana, we've got a base star entering the system. They haven't seen me yet, and I'm positive they haven't picked up our camp."

"Oh, frak! Morgan, there's no place to go. We don't dare lead them back to the OSIRIS — and we certainly can't run."

"Is the shuttle back?"

"Landed about a centar ago. You'd best get back yourself and hide your ship in the caves. If we're lucky, maybe they'll leave without ever knowing we're here."

The Viper was already on its way back to base. "You don't believe in luck any more than I do, Captain."

"You got any bright ideas, genius?"

"Maybe... Tell you when I land."

Continuing to monitor the base star's approach, Morgan considered possible ways to handle what could rapidly become a lethal situation. There was no way a shuttle — especially one carrying twenty-eight people -- could outrun the Cylons. And two Vipers didn't have a chance in Hades of outfighting an entire base star, no matter how good their pilots were.

Morgan was an excellent pilot. He was also an astrophysicist — one of the best ever graduated from the Colonies' prestigious Science Institute. Newly commissioned just before the OSIRIS launched on her deep star exploration mission, he was rated astrosurvey tech, second class. But even Mira, the astrosurvey leader, acknowledged him her superior in the field of stellar evolution. His theories on the later stages of evolution in supermassive stars had begun to revolutionise the discipline even before he left the Institute to enter the Military Academy on Caprica. Now, perhaps, his expertise could be used to some advantage against the Cylons.

The thirty-member astrosurvey/planetsurvey team had entered the system of a late-evolution star four days before, intending to spend a section studying the effects of a pre-nova star on its planetary system. The system's inner planet was chosen as a base. For four days, planetsurvey techs had been shuttling from one planet to another, happily collecting samples, while the astrophysicists made holograms and gathered spectra.

Morgan, a lieutenant aboard the OSIRIS, was one of only two Warriors on the mission. Captain Diana, the mission's military commander, was also a skilled astrophysicist and had worked with the astrosurvey team in the past. As scientists, both Warriors had been delighted to be chosen for this particular mission. Of course, they had not expected the Cylons to drop in.

Diana was waiting for Morgan when he landed. "Well?"

"The star, Diana. I think we may be able to use it."

"What in Hades are you talking about?"

"Look, I've been studying nova phenomena for yahrens, ever since I entered the Institute. I'm not sure, but I think I can predict the final outburst closely enough to use the explosion to mask our escape."

"And if you can't?"

"Then we're dead. But we're dead anyway, if we don't try."

Diana regarded him thoughtfully. She was aware that he probably knew more about stellar evolution than anyone else alive — and if he thought they could use the pre-nova star as a shield, well, they probably could. But there were twenty-eight civilians to consider...

Still, there weren't really any feasible alternatives.

"All right, Morgan. If you think there's a chance, try it. What can the rest of us do to help?"

He started for their makeshift computer centre, talking as he went. "Get me all the data we've gathered on the star, especially anything showing changing rate of pulsation, and every image we've got of the spectrum. And, for Sagan's sake, clear that computer!"

"Anything else?" She was practically running to keep up with his longer stride.

"Yeah. Pray the Cylons don't suspect we're here, because this is going to take a little time."

For over ten centars, Morgan worked nonstop, attempting to correlate all the data gathered over the past four days, trying to analyse changes in pulsation, looking for patterns in scores of spectra. When he overloaded the computer for the fifth time, Diana ordered him to take a break.

"You won't be any good to us if you work yourself to the point of collapse," she told him, noting his pallor and the dark shadows around his eyes. "Get some rest. The star won't go anywhere."

"Apparently the Cylons won't, either," he replied. "Or haven't you noticed they're setting up a camp?"

"I've noticed. The base star's in orbit. But so far, there's no sign they suspect anyone's here. So we've time. Morgan, don't argue with me. Get some sleep." She touched his shoulder affectionately. "Consider that an order,

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Lieutenant."

"All right! All right!"

Diana watched him as he left. Even under the best of circumstances, Morgan tended to be somewhat impatient, especially with himself. These were not the best of circumstances. He looked utterly exhausted, but Diana seriously doubted he'd get any rest.

He didn't. Morgan lay on his bunk with his eyes closed, mentally working on the problem facing him. A base star, with three hundred fighters and the Lords knew how many laser cannon. An overloaded shuttle, twenty-eight civilians, and two Vipers. Even if they contacted the OSIRIS for help, they'd still be hopelessly outnumbered. A pre-nova star, a system of barren, lifeless planets, a...

Hold it! That was it! He had the answer -- if only the figures checked!

Morgan raced back to the computer. Diana was at the console. "Move!" he ordered.

Surprised, she obeyed instantly. "What...?"

"No time to explain. But if this checks out, we can destroy that base star!"

"If what checks out? Destroy...? Morgan, are you completely out of your mind?"

"The star! The star! That's our weapon!"

As she watched him feverishly checking equations, matching figures and changing periods of variability, Diana became more and more convinced Morgan was crazy. A star as a weapon?

"It works!" he exclaimed suddenly, a note of triumph in his voice. He turned to face her, raking a lock of damp golden hair from his eyes. "By all the Lords, Diana, it works!"

"What works? Morgan, will you please tell me what you're talking about?"

"Think, Diana! Think!" His green eyes sparkled with sudden laughter. "The ultimate weapon! The Cylons'll never know what hit them! Come on. Let's get the whole team together. They'll all have a part in it. I'll explain as we go."

The explanation, when they all heard it, was astounding, incredible, fantastically daring -- and downright frightening. But, given Morgan's reputation, his undisputed skill and knowledge, no one doubted for a micron it would work. It would require absolutely perfect timing -- but it could be done.

* * * * *

Just over seven centars later, two Vipers launched from the surface of the innermost planet in the pre-nova system, making no effort to avoid being seen. The Cylons spotted them almost at once, and sent a large force to intercept. The Vipers behaved in a most peculiar manner, dodging among the planets in a

highly erratic manner, not trying to escape.

The Cylons were so busy with the Vipers, they failed to notice the shuttle's launch. It carefully kept the mass of the planet between itself and the base star as it raced at maximum speed toward the fringes of the star system.

Once they were certain the shuttle was clear, Morgan and Diana headed straight for the pre-nova star, nearly skimming its chromosphere. Fascinated, they watched the photosphere, the visible stellar surface, churn with a violence no human had ever before observed from so close a distance.

The Vipers circled the star, luring their enemies, dodging Cylon fire, evading and even managing to destroy two of the enemy craft. Then, suddenly, they turned, using maximum thrust to streak from the system, leaving ten bewildered Cylon Raiders to reverse course and try to follow.

It was too late.

The explosion caught the Cylon fighters, vapourising the small ships instantly. Before the base star could even react, the expanding shock front encompassed it as well.

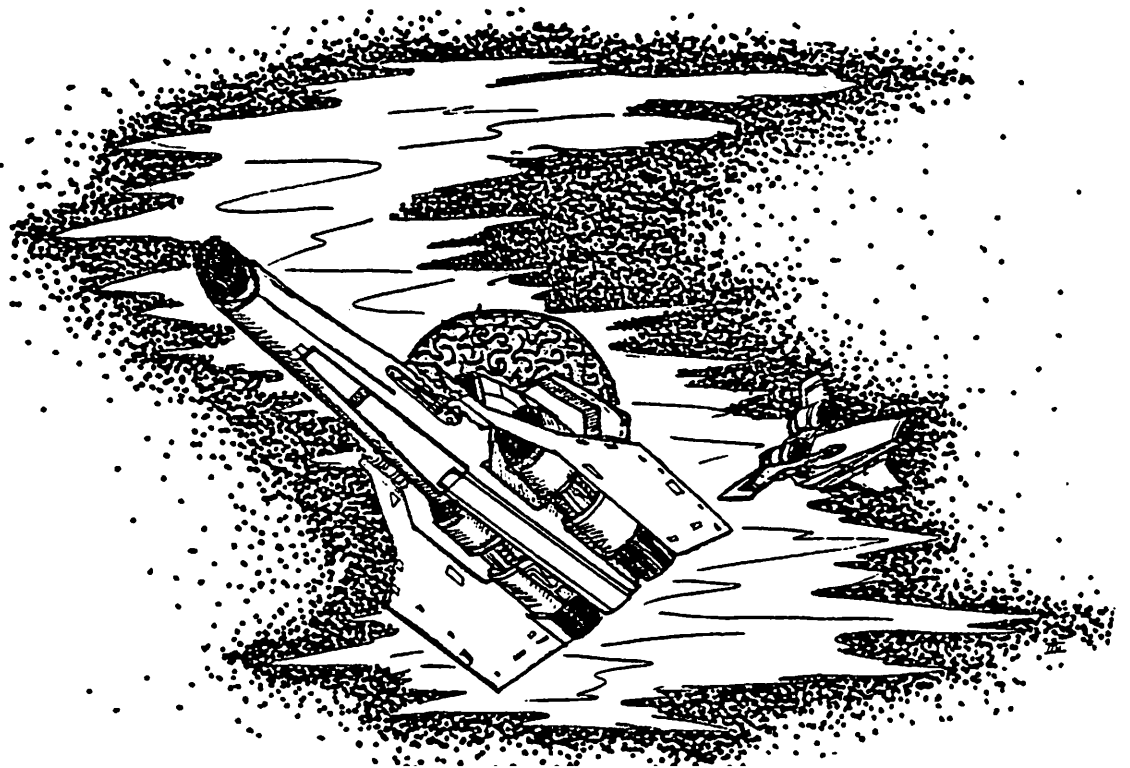
Morgan didn't see the explosion. He knew its potential, born of the sudden implosion of a supermassive stellar core — and he most definitely had no desire to be permanently blinded. But his calculations told him exactly when the outburst occurred, and his scanner dutifully recorded it. Microns behind Diana's Viper, he rode the expanding edge of the shock front, keeping just ahead of the destructive power of the most violent known force in the universe.

His "weapon."

Not just a star. Not even just the explosive force of a nova.

The "ultimate weapon" of nature, blazing with the energy of an entire galaxy, bright as a billion suns. The final cataclysmic death of a star.

A supernova.



LETTERS

At long last, we've begun to get letters from our readers, commenting on some of what they've been seeing and reading...

"Purple and Orange?" is great. I love it. Being a true-blue-squadron GALACTICA fan, it was the saddest day of my life when the Awful Broadcasting Company cancelled my favourite show. Now they've cancelled GALACTICA 1980. Sigh. "Purple and Orange?" is filling the void with some really great stories, and the humour never fails to get at least a giggle, and more often an outright laugh. This means a lot to me, as I'm still laughing after several re-readings of the four issues I have. Keep up the wonderful job! It is much appreciated.

I am eagerly looking forward to the "Lock Athena in the Closet" contest and to following the adventures of the OSIRIS. Is it possible to join the crew from St. Paul?

Sincerely,

Sharon Monroe
St. Paul, Minnesota

Needless to say, we were delighted to receive Sharon's letter, which accompanied what turned out to be the winning entry in our "Get Rid of the Kid" contest. Our answer to the final question is a resounding, "Of course!" In fact, our readers will find Sharon's first story elsewhere in this issue. We think it's pretty good. And the battlestar OSIRIS is indeed pleased to welcome Flight Sergeant Alexandra to our crew!

Dear Editor,

I recently purchased the fourth issue of "Purple and Orange?" and enjoyed it immensely. I felt the best story was "The Celebration," especially since it explained your use of the two colours, and Apollo's and Adama's reactions to them in the three-hour series premiere.

"The Trap" runs a close second, and I like what you are doing about increasing the backgrounds of the OSIRIS personnel. Keep it up!

I hope all your subsequent issues are as good as this.
(No! Make that better!)

Sincerely yours,

Bennett Snyder
Chicago, Illinois

Thanks much, Bennett. What more can we say? It's hard to remain humble...

Joy,

Since I don't have a phone, I thought I'd drop a line. Please correct spelling and punctuation. I'm an artist, not a writer! But after seeing #5, I have a few things to say.

First off, the covers. Now, that's the kind of cover I like to see. I firmly believe a piece of art like this is a benefit to a zine cover. It grabs the attention. Run on antique white stock lends a very professional look to the presentation. Linda definitely has a future in art. She seems to capture Apollo much better than Bucko, though. Actually, I can see why. Being an artist myself, I can vouch for the fact that Hatch has a bone structure that's an artist's dream. Linda, you're terrific! Stay with it!

The review. Yes, I like the new show. But then, I enjoy comedy. The laughs are tops on GALACTICA 1980. The way Boxhead -- oops! Troy -- and Dimmo -- Dillon -- stumble through mundane Earth's daily life is a riot! I tend to view the show as a parody. If I even try to remotely compare it to BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, I can't cope. By the way, I love the kids! All in all, GALACTICA 1980 is a nice way to wait for TENSPEED AND BROWNSHOE.

The art. Karen Pauli's cartoons of BG are absolutely terrific! They are simple and very clever.

Todd Hamilton is getting better and better in the realism department. Witness the title illo for "Something Nice."

Steve Casey. Oh, my God! Talent like this is a treasure in today's fanzines. The man is the best I've seen in the use of pointillism. Incredible! I'd go absolutely mad! His work is extremely professional and well presented. You can see the time spent on each piece. The penwork is flawless and, though plentiful,

never overdone. Absolutely remarkable! And his pencil work is excellent, too. Steve, my hat's off to you. Care to give lessons?

Capricana. Though an obvious beginner, I think you can see she shows much talent. Sure, her proportion is primitive, but look at her positioning! Do you know how hard it is to capture a position that's not stiff? Her illo is clean and well planned. Cap, you need to work with your eyes, proportion, and shading; but you certainly show a definite talent. Don't let anyone ever tell you otherwise.

Linda's portfolio. I think a portfolio in a zine is a great idea. Especially when the pictures can be removed with no injury to the zine. I hope "Purple and Orange?" will run something like this more often, and go with other artists as well. Like Steve and Todd.

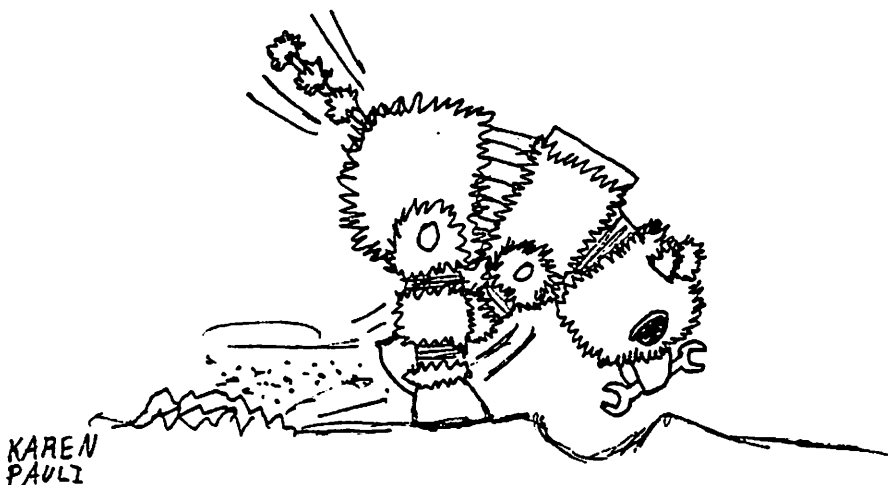
I believe #5 is by far the best issue of "Purple and Orange?" to date, with the usual high standard of fiction and layout. Let's hope it stays that way.

See you at Mini-Con,

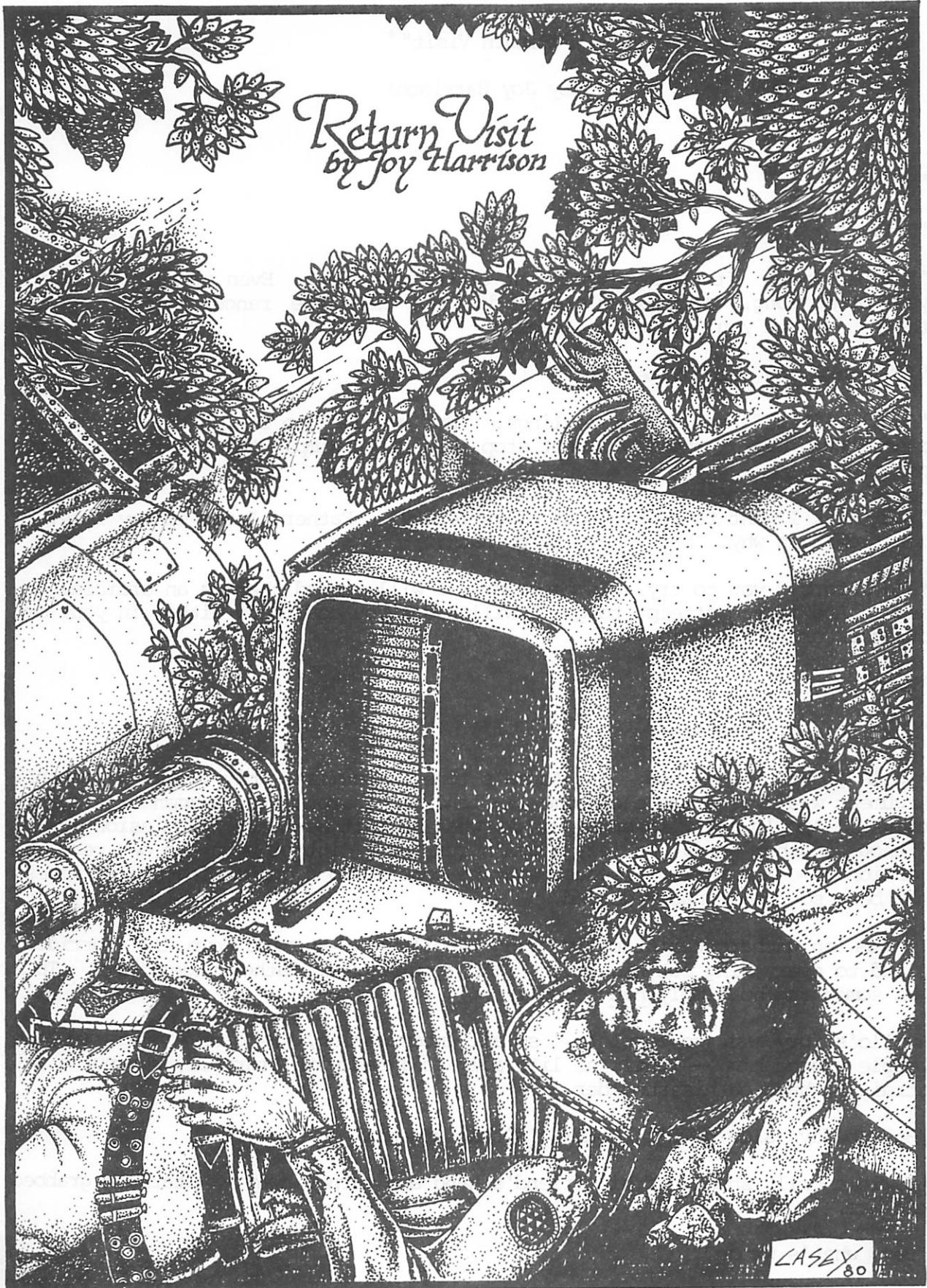
Paulie (Gilmore)
Chicago, Illinois

There isn't much to say about this letter, either -- other than to add our own concurrence with everything Paulie said. She's done a lot of excellent art for us, too. (See "Arion" in Issue #5 for examples. And, of course, the always delightful "Pandora's Box.") So how about an issue featuring "Paulie's Portfolio?"

"Purple and Orange?" does plan to feature the work of other artists, possibly in Issue #8, which is being planned for early in 1981. Do any of you artists out there want to do a portfolio for us?



Return Visit
by Joy Harrison



"Return Visit"*

(By Joy Harrison)

"No."

"But..."

"I said, 'no.' It is absolutely out of the question. Even if we could spare you for so long, your Viper simply does not have the range. You might get there — but you'd never get back."

"If I take the recon Viper..."

"Apollo, I understand your feelings. But we are too far out of range. We cannot turn back, and I will not stop this Fleet simply to satisfy your curiosity."

"You think I want to go back out of curiosity? Father, I owe him my life. I can't explain why, but I have to go back."

"And I forbid you to try. If necessary, I will record that as an official order. And if you attempt to go, I will order you confined, either in your own quarters or in the brig."

"Father..."

"That is all, Captain."

Apollo might have argued, but Adama's tone was unmistakably one of dismissal. Argument would be a waste of time — and might arouse the Commander's suspicions. Apollo fully intended to do what he felt he must, permission or no. Without another word, he left Adama's quarters, intent upon his own personal mission — and furious because what he considered a quite reasonable request had been so unreasonably denied.

It was an uncharacteristically angry Apollo who stormed down the corridor, blind to everything but his anger. Why couldn't his father understand? This was something he simply had to do...

Apollo's fury was so complete, so all-encompassing, he didn't even see the people around him — until he literally collided with Starbuck, who put a restraining hand on his shoulder.

"Hey, buddy, slow down! Nothing's that urgent!"

Apollo angrily shook off his friend's hand and turned away. Starbuck grabbed his arm.

"Hey, what's wrong?"

"Nothing, Starbuck."

Starbuck's eyes narrowed. "Don't try to con me, Apollo. What's going on?"

"I said, 'nothing.'"

"Stow the felgercarb, buddy. Maybe I can help."

Apollo sighed, admitting defeat. "All right, Starbuck. I want to go back to that planet where I crashed, where you and Boomer picked me up. My father won't permit it."

"The Cylon?"

Apollo nodded. "It's something I have to do, Starbuck. No one ever thanked him for what he did. I don't know why, but it's important somehow. I've got a feeling..."

"Huh?"

"Don't ask me to explain it, Starbuck. I can't. But I've got to go back."

"Okay, Apollo! Okay! But it's been a long time, and..."

"The recon Viper's got the range."

"Maybe." Starbuck's voice was noncommittal. "But you were hurt pretty bad, and you've only been out of Life Centre a couple of days. Are you sure you're up to it?" Starbuck still vividly remembered finding Apollo in that primitive shelter, unconscious and barely alive.

"I'm fine, Starbuck. A little sore, maybe, but I can still fly a Viper."

"That Viper?"

Apollo grinned. The recon Viper had given Starbuck quite a ride his first time out with her. She was better than twice as fast as any other ship in their small fleet, had more than double the range, and was equipped with a special computer capable of flying her without the aid of a human pilot. Apollo had flown her a couple of times himself, although he preferred his own ship. He wasn't sure he liked having to rely on speed as his only weapon — the recon Viper was unarmed.

"Even that one." Apollo's grin faded. "Starbuck, I've got to do it. He saved my life. Now, maybe I can do something for him."

* * * * *

Less than a centar later, Apollo climbed into the cockpit of the recon Viper. He hesitated for a micron, then switched on the computer. "Hello, C.O.R.A."

The sophisticated scanners recognised him instantly. "Captain Apollo," the computer acknowledged. "Good morning. It's been an awfully long time. Is anything wrong? You don't sound like yourself."

Apollo smiled humourlessly. The computer sounded suspiciously like Starbuck, despite its definitely feminine voice. "No, nothing's wrong, C.O.R.A.," he replied.

"You're sure? Well, then, what's our mission?"

There'd been no time to program any data into the computer. In fact, there'd been barely enough time to get the ship fuelled, once Starbuck persuaded the ground crew to ready her for launch. Apollo didn't want to know how he'd done it.

"I'll have to tell you as we go."

"A secret mission?"

There was a hint of excitement in the computer's voice, and, not for the first time, Apollo wondered about machine consciousness as he replied, "Something like that." Maybe this would prevent questions when they received no launch orders from Core Control. Or when he ignored the inevitable orders to return.

"All systems ready for launch, Captain," C.O.R.A. reported. "Awaiting orders."

There were, of course, no orders.

"Forgive me, father," Apollo pleaded silently as he sent the recon Viper hurtling down the launch tube. "I have to do this. Try to understand..."

Microns later, static heralded Core Control on the com. "Recon Viper One, you have launched without authorisation. Return to GALACTICA at once."

Apollo could picture the scene on the GALACTICA's bridge, where he knew Adama hovered over a scanner. There would be confusion, bewilderment — and anger. His father would be furious, but nothing could be done about it. Apollo ignored the recall order. Any micron now...

"Captain Apollo, you will return to the GALACTICA at once, or I will have no alternative but to send ships after you." The Commander's voice was crisp, cold. There was no trace of emotion as he threatened to send a Viper squadron in pursuit of his son.

It was an idle threat. Apollo knew the GALACTICA had nothing capable of catching him. Adama knew it, too. But the threat itself created a problem.

"Captain, are you sure this is an authorised mission?"

For a micron, Apollo thought seriously about switching off the computer. He could fly the ship without it — but C.O.R.A. could react a lot faster than he could, at least under the present circumstances. He was an excellent pilot, even better — if somewhat less flamboyant — than Starbuck. But, as Starbuck had so pointedly reminded him, he had been rather badly hurt. The doctors had released him from Life Centre but didn't want him returning to duty for at least another section.

Under other circumstances, Apollo might have done as the doctors instructed. He was still weak and tired easily, and every now and then he felt a sharp stab of pain in his right side as his body tried to warn him to take things easy for a while. But he felt compelled to find his Cylon benefactor — and if he waited any longer, even the recon Viper wouldn't have the necessary range. He was limited by the life support system, and, as it was, he knew

he'd have a problem with fuel, perhaps an insurmountable one. As the saying went, it was now -- or never. So, instead of answering C.O.R.A.'s question, he cut off the com and fed destination coordinates into the computer.

"Captain Apollo..."

"No questions, C.O.R.A. I can't answer them."

The computer considered Apollo's response silently, then apparently accepted it. He was Flight Commander of the GALACTICA, after all. Surely he knew what he was doing.

Apollo watched the scanner for any sign of the threatened pursuit, but nothing appeared. Then he settled down to wait. Even with the recon Viper's tremendous speed, it would be a long time before he reached his destination.

* * * * *

Apollo woke to the buzzing of his proximity alarm. A star system lay directly ahead. He'd been in flight, at top speed, for nearly a full day.

"Programmed destination in sight, Captain," C.O.R.A. reported.

"Execute high orbit scan. We're looking for the wreckage of a Viper."

The computer obeyed, and Apollo watched intently as the everchanging planetary landscape seemed to flow beneath him. The ship passed over a high but narrow ridge of mountains, then a small land-locked sea, then land once more. Seemingly within centons, the wreckage of his crashed ship was visible on Apollo's scanner. Starbuck's luck, he thought. The search could have taken centars.

Apollo was surprised to discover how like Caprica the planet was. He hadn't remembered anything about it. He landed in a meadow alongside the wrecked Viper, then opened his ship's canopy and sat for a short time looking around at the trees, the hills, the bright sun-lit meadow. The yellow-orange sun felt pleasantly warm, and he leaned back in his seat with his eyes closed, enjoying the few moments of peace. Relaxed, with the sun warm on his face and the sounds and smells of the planet all around him, he could almost imagine he was home...

"Captain, we must start back to the GALACTICA within thirty centars, if you intend to return at all. After that, the Fleet will be beyond even my range."

Jarred out of his reverie and back to reality, Apollo acknowledged the computer's remark, then remembered the single greatest problem of his self-appointed mission. He checked his Viper's fuel cells; they were, as he'd feared, ominously low. "Now, I wonder..."

He climbed out of the cockpit, then dropped somewhat stiffly to the ground. He wasn't sure, but he thought there might still be fuel in the cells of the wrecked ship. If so, it wouldn't be hard to transfer it.

Again, he was lucky. There was some fuel in the wreckage, and it didn't take long to move it. There wasn't much -- but it was enough. As long as the GALACTICA was still in range of his life support system, he'd have sufficient fuel to reach her. Not quite enough for a landing, maybe -- but he'd landed

with empty fuel cells before.

"Okay, C.O.R.A.," he said at last, leaning into the cockpit from a precarious perch on the Viper's starboard wing. "I'll be back as soon as I can." He switched off the computer.

A careful search of the nearby wreckage revealed a trail, one Apollo guessed had been deliberately set for his friends to follow when they'd come looking for him. Now, it was his turn. He crossed the meadow and climbed a steep hill, following the trail that had once helped save his life. High on the hillside, he found a primitive shelter. Small chests lined the three rough wooden walls. There were several mats on the grass-strewn floor, and a fire burned low in a stone-lined hollow at the centre of the shelter. But aside from inanimate furnishings, the place was empty.

Apollo hesitated in the entrance, then sat down on a mat near the fire and waited, facing the door and gazing into the shifting flames.

* * * * *

A faint sound, no more than the snapping of twigs, roused the Warrior from his fire-induced trance. Startled, he looked up as the owner of the shelter entered. Then Apollo very slowly got to his feet, holding his empty hands well away from any possible weapon.

Apollo had no doubt the large, powerful-looking reptile was a Cylon. He recognised the face as the half-remembered one of his delirium. He hadn't realised how big the creature was, or how powerful. It could quite literally tear him apart. But Apollo wasn't worried. If this Cylon had wanted him dead, he'd have died in the wreckage of his ship back in the meadow.

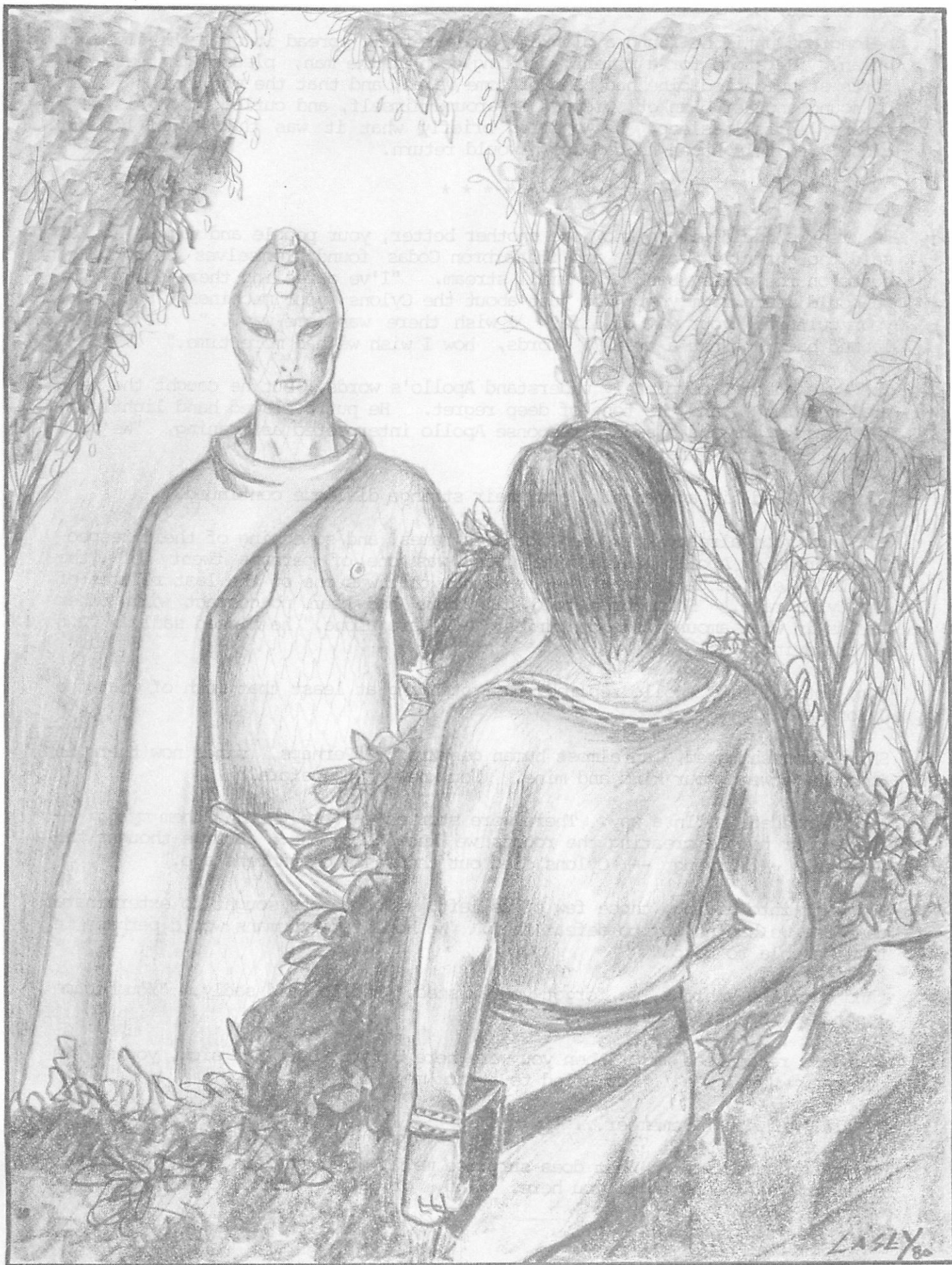
The Cylon obviously recognised him, too. The big reptile set down the bundles he was carrying and advanced slowly toward Apollo. One clawed, four-fingered hand reached out, and a surprisingly gentle finger touched the man's face, tracing the fading line of a scar above Apollo's right eye. A hissing voice said something that sounded like a question.

Apollo shook his head slowly. "I don't understand," he said. "But perhaps this will help." He carefully removed the small language computer, a modification of the old Linguatron, from his belt and switched it on. "My name is Apollo. I've come back to thank you for saving my life."

There was a hissing response, but the little computer couldn't translate. Apollo shrugged mentally. The Colonies had known so little about the original Cylons, had thought them nothing more than myth. The computer didn't have enough information to draw on. "Well, it was an idea," he murmured. "But I guess we'll just have to manage without it."

The Cylon obviously understood what Apollo had in mind. He sat down beside the fire opposite his human visitor, and they began a rather faltering language lesson that lasted the rest of the day and far into the night. Fortunately, they both learned quickly. By the time an exhausted Apollo fell asleep on his mat, they were able to exchange at least a few basic concepts.

The Cylon hissed something that, with human vocal apparatus, might have been, "Apollo?" When there was no response, he got to his feet, rummaged among his



belongings until he found a blanket, and carefully spread it over the sleeping human. He stood for a moment, looking down at the man, pleased that his efforts at human medicine had been of some value, and that the man lived. Then he found another blanket, wrapped it around himself, and curled up on his mat. Before he fell asleep, he wondered briefly what it was that bound him so closely to this human he had known would return.

* * * * *

"I wish we could get to know one another better, your people and mine," Apollo said thoughtfully, as he and Shimarbron Godas found themselves comfortable seats on the grassy bank of a small stream. "I've a feeling there's so much we could learn from you. Not just about the Cylons, your machines. But about your culture, your way of life. I wish there was some way..." He sighed, leaned back against a tree. "Lords, how I wish we had more time."

The Cylon didn't completely understand Apollo's words, but he caught the general meaning -- and the tone of deep regret. He put a clawed hand lightly on the human's arm and hissed a response Apollo interpreted as meaning, "We've a little time yet. Let's use it."

Apollo nodded his agreement, and their strange dialogue continued.

Man and Cylon already knew one another's names, and something of their respective worlds. Apollo learned the Cylon was one of perhaps twenty of "the People" left on this planet -- a planet that was one of the last refuges of the Cylon race. Shimarbron told him there had been no contact with other worlds in what amounted to centuries. "We are alone," he hissed sadly. "And we are dying."

"No, not alone," Apollo replied, understanding at least that much of what the Cylon said.

Shimarbron shrugged, an almost human gesture. "Perhaps, since now there is contact between your kind and mine. You knew of us before?"

Apollo nodded. "In a way. There were stories -- we thought them myths -- about your people creating the robots we know as Cylons. But we thought the original -- living -- Cylons died out thousands of yahrens ago."

"We went into hiding, those few of us left. Our robots sought to exterminate us, and we had no way to defeat them. We hoped you humans would perhaps in time be able to help."

"And over the yahrens, we forgot you existed," Apollo said sadly. "You became legends. Myths."

"Yet you recognised me. When you were here before, hurt and sick, you saw me and knew what I was. You tried to attack me."

"I did? I don't remember..."

"I am not surprised. What does surprise me is that you are able to remember anything that happened to you here. And, of course, that you recognised me before. How?"

Apollo smiled. "From our history scans. Our tapes had drawings. I always thought they were based on fantasy. I vaguely remembered your face, though, and went back to the tapes to see if I was right. I..." He hesitated briefly. "I'm sorry for attacking you. I..."

"There is no need. I understand. I have been thinking much, since you were first here, of the little contact the People had once, long ago, with humans. And now of my two contacts with you. There is a reason for this."

"What reason?"

"I do not know. Perhaps only that we should talk, as we are doing now. The future belongs to your kind, not mine. Ours was the past. It is fitting that past and future meet, that the future learn from the past, that the past act to make possible the future. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I think so. That's why you helped me before, isn't it?"

The Cylon stared silently at Apollo for several microns before answering. "Perhaps. And perhaps it was only because you were hurt, and I was capable of being of help. I do not know. I simply did what was necessary, what was right. Would not a human have done the same?"

"Some would," Apollo replied. "But not all."

Shimarbron was surprised by the bitterness in the man's voice. "Do not be so harsh a judge of your own kind. No one race can be perfect, just as no one entity can be. You humans, I think, are better than most."

"You don't know enough about us..."

"I know you, and have seen your friends." He was silent for a moment. "As I said, the future is yours. I think your people are capable of learning from the past. It is the only explanation for our meeting, and for your return here. You have been fighting our creations a long time, have you not?"

"Yes. We've been at war with them for over a thousand yahrens," Apollo said. "Now..."

"Now," Shimarbron interrupted, "they have committed yet some other crime. And now the humans, too, seek help, and a place to hide. Why?"

Apollo would have omitted any mention of the destruction of the Colonies, wanting to spare his companion. But Shimarbron guessed too much. And, when finally told the full extent of the Cylon treachery, the descendant of their creators denounced them even more strongly than Apollo himself might have done.

That denunciation, unmistakable in any language, provided yet another bond between Apollo and Shimarbron. They liked and respected one another, and at last they both began to feel they were properly understanding one another as well.

Unfortunately, they were running out of time. Apollo had to leave in less than three centars; otherwise, he'd never be able to catch up with the Fleet. He couldn't take the Cylon with him -- and Shimarbron didn't want to leave.

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Yet both regretted the necessity of their parting, for both knew it would be permanent. In an easy, companionable silence, they left the peaceful stream and slowly began walking back up the hill toward Shimarbron's home.

The roar of a hungry predator shattered the stillness. It wasn't a warning; the creature sprang from its hiding place even as it roared. Apollo's reflexes were fast, but not quite fast enough this time. The big feline struck from above, knocking the human to the ground and momentarily stunning him.

Shimarbron reacted in his own way, hissing a fierce challenge to draw the predator's attention from the motionless Apollo. The hunter snarled angrily, then launched itself at the Cylon.

Apollo was unconscious for only a few microns. When he came to, he was dizzy, slightly disoriented for a moment. Then the sounds of battle made him suddenly aware of the life-and-death struggle taking place only a short distance from where he lay. He rolled over, drew his laser, and tried to aim it all in one motion. Then he froze. He couldn't afford to miss. The Cylon and his opponent were locked so close...

Eyes narrowed, Apollo concentrated on his ever-moving target. He took a deep breath, steadied his laser with both hands, then fired.

He didn't miss.

Apollo got somewhat shakily to his feet and, laser still in his hand, staggered to the body of what had once been a 400-pound carnivore. His laser had nearly blown the massive head apart. Then, turning from the huge creature, he dropped to his knees beside Shimarbron, taking the wounded reptile into his arms.

Apollo knew literally nothing about Cylon medicine, but it was quite apparent Shimarbron was dying, his body ripped and torn apart by the hunter's deadly claws. The Cylon had sacrificed his own life to save Apollo, and there was nothing Apollo could do to help him, except perhaps make his death a little less lonely.

Unwinking black eyes, pain-glazed now, looked up into Apollo's, and the Cylon hissed something very faintly -- Apollo's name. He weakly raised one hand to touch the man's face, as he had when they met, and Apollo caught it tightly in his own. Then one last word, and Shimarbron Godas was dead.

That final word was friend.

Head bowed, Apollo wept for a long time over the dead Cylon who had twice saved his life. Then, resolutely, he began to drag the heavy body back up the hillside. It wasn't far; but Apollo, not yet fully recovered from the crash, was still weak, and for him the distance seemed endless. Still, he persisted. There was only one thing he could do for Shimarbron now.

Apollo carefully arranged the Cylon's body on one of the mats near the fire, then covered it with a blanket. He knelt silently for several centons, remembering the past centars and all he owed this wise and gentle being. "Good-bye, my friend," he murmured at last, then got to his feet. There were tears in his eyes, and his hands shook as he switched his laser to low power and aimed it at the wooden supports and walls of the shelter. The wood caught

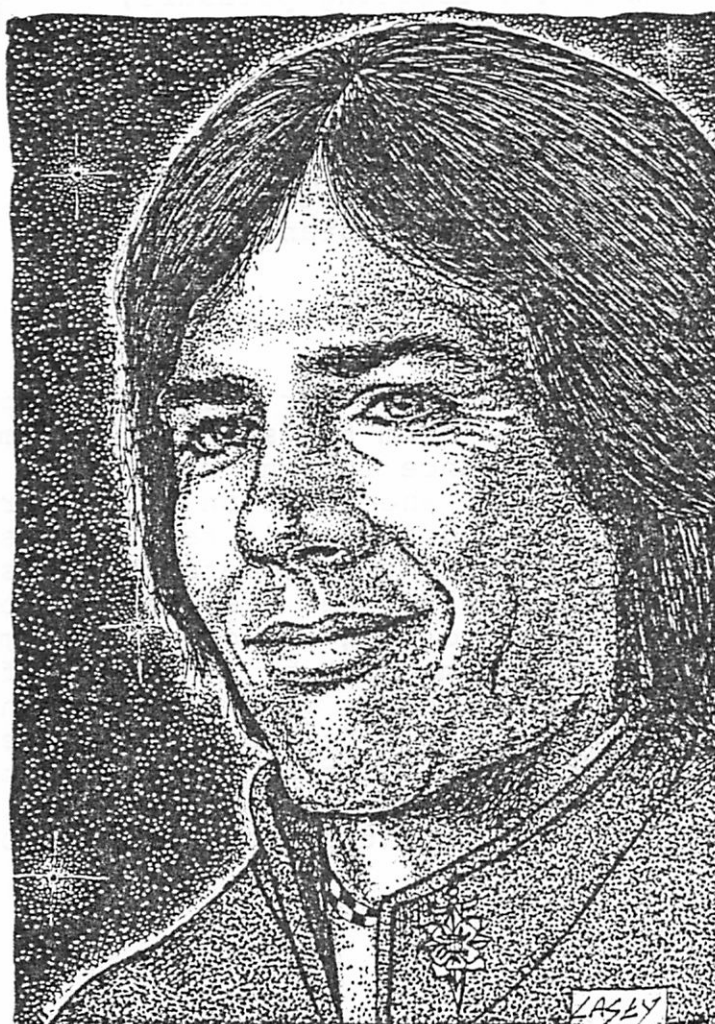
fire almost at once, and Apollo hastily backed away from the huge funeral pyre.

He stood for a long time, watching the blaze and praying silently for Shimarbron Godas, one of the last of his kind on this planet, perhaps one of the last anywhere in the universe. The Cylon who had died for him. The Cylon who, for such a brief time, had been his friend...

Then Apollo turned away, brushing the tears from his eyes. The past was dead -- but he had learned much that would be of value in the future. Perhaps Shimarbron was right, and that was why Apollo had felt compelled to return here. It was, as the Cylon said, the only explanation for their meeting -- or, at least, the only explanation that gave Shimarbron's death any meaning.

As he crossed the meadow toward his ship, Apollo glanced back once at the fire on the hillside. Then, reaching the Viper, he paused for a few microns to look up at the stars.

It was time to go home.



*This story was written in January 1980, before the series GALACTICA 1980 -- and especially the episode of that series entitled "The Return of Starbuck" -- ever appeared on television. Any similarities are entirely coincidental.

RELATIONSHIPS

(By Anne Cecil)

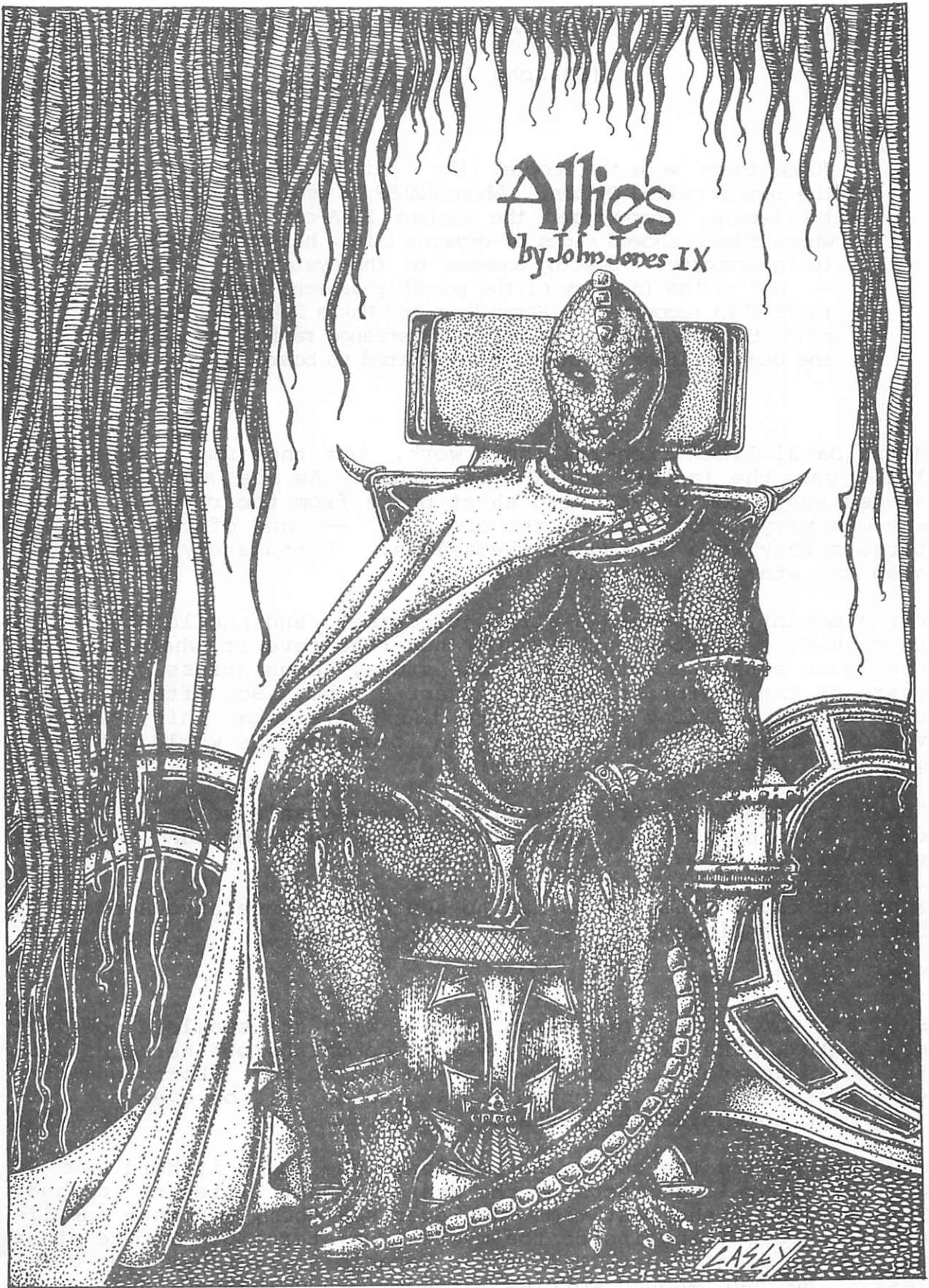
Shortly will I lead my squadron outward
 Through the darkness into unknown regions,
 Actively repelling Cylon legions --
 Reckless now, no love to call me backward.
 Briefly was my life adorned with beauty.
 Urgently we took our love's full measure,
 Clinging to each moment's fleeting pleasure,
 Knowing soon we'd hear the call of duty.
 All my soul still aches, my senses reeling,
 Picturing her fall, that rush of sorrow;
 Only emptiness now greets each morrow.
 Locked away is all my heart's deep feeling.
 Look ahead to friendship for assistance --
 One to ride beside me for the distance.



Ask Athena why our fire is dying!
 Told her from the start that I'm a rover;
 High romance is fine until it's over.
 Even yet, she keeps on gamely trying.
 Never said it wasn't real that season --
 All the light of comets in her smiling;
 Shining blue, her eyes were so beguiling.
 There's no plan to love, no rhyme, no reason.
 As the time went by, the magic faded.
 Realise I never meant to twist her;
 Breaking up's delayed 'cause she's your sister.
 Understand she's not to feel out-traded.
 Cass's claims are loose and not demanding,
 Keeping me enthralled without commanding.

Allies

by John Jones IX



"Allies"

(By John Jones IX)

(Once there were the People, the reptilian race who created the robots called Cylons. When SHARER, a small scout ship of the People, encountered the ancient SEGA-class Cylon liner whose debris showed signs of organic life, her crew closed in to investigate. Seeking answers to the mystery of the liner -- and to the identity of the possibly sapient mammalian body their ship recovered -- Karan Urun and Makra Dakal prepared to board the Cylon vessel. There were strange radio signals from the damaged liner as the People prepared to board...)

Makra Dakal liked free-fall suit work, but the jump to the SEGA liner was the longest she'd ever made. As she and Karan Urun headed away from SHARER with short puffs from their rocket packs, she was very conscious of the distance -- and of the beautiful targets they were making of themselves. Fortunately, there were also the stars all around.

For a moment, they held a straight course, and she let the stars touch her. Non-telepaths could never believe it when you told them you sensed a mind among the stars, spun across the light years on the radiation like an insect's web. So, after a while, you gave up telling them. Here the stars were thin, and the voice of the star mind fainter than it was on the world where she grew up. But it was still there.

"Bear ten degrees left, Makrala," came Karan's voice in her radio. "And heads up. The Cylons won't show you any mercy for stargazing."

That was true. The Cylons had no aesthetic sense anyone had ever been able to discover.

"Yes, Nai."

She made the course correction slowly, with the smallest possible movements. That was the only way to do things out here, no matter how naked you felt or how far you had to go. Doing anything else risked not getting where you wanted to go, or even not getting back to where you started.

Once she'd made the course correction, she found it hard not to go back to at least watching the stars, if not listening to them. This might be the last time she ever saw them, if more hostile Cylons were waiting inside the mysterious starship. On the other hand, she didn't want to increase Karan's worries by being careless. He had enough worries already. Had she made a mistake

back in the storeroom, pulling that admission of love out of him? It would have come sooner or later, but should it have come now?

Did she love him? Perhaps not in the same way he seemed to love her -- ready to take her as life-mate and make all his eggs hers. But certainly she cared enough for him to try giving what he asked, and more than enough to be bitter about the possibility that the Cylons would keep her from even trying!

The best thing she could do now to make sure the Cylons wouldn't come between her and Karan was to put everything but the work at hand out of her mind. Telepaths had ways of doing that not open to ordinary People.

She'd just finished clearing her mind when her companion started to announce another course correction. At the same time, the radio crackled.

"Nai, Dan here. The Cylons are broadcasting a distress signal. At least, I think that's what it is. It certainly sounds like an automatic transmission repeating itself."

Dan's guess was as good as any -- and probably better than most. "Urun here. Thanks. Any more of the other radio chatter?"

"Just a bit. I... Nai, this may be silly, but..."

"If it is, I'll tell you. Now, you tell me."

"Yes, Nai. I think it's the aliens, using Cylon language. I mean, I don't think it's Cylon vocalisers making those sounds. It's got to be alive."

"If the aliens were aboard the ship for any amount of time, I imagine they'd probably learn or be taught the Cylon language. A good guess, Dan."

"Thank you, Nai."

"Keep listening, and record everything you hear. It's just possible we may pick up enough to let the computer translate it into modern Cylon. If we do, that's going to make talking to our scaleless friends much easier."

"I'll do that."

"It will have to be radio silence from now on, unless you sight another ship, or there's trouble with SHARER. We can't assume all the Cylons are too busy with whatever's going on aboard their ship to keep a listening watch."

The radio went dead as the Pilot obeyed. They had to make the course correction faster than Makra liked -- but nothing went wrong. At the end, they were heading straight for the SEGA, and then there was nothing to do but watch the battered ship growing larger and larger against the starfield ahead.

Urun touched down first, relieved to find his boot magnets held him. Some of the older Cylon ships had been built with nonmagnetic hulls. He helped Makra land and steady herself, then started looking around for a hatch. He didn't want to cut into the hull except as a last resort. They couldn't be sure what they were cutting into, and they'd use up a lot of power which would almost certainly be needed elsewhere.

With the steady clunk, clunk, clunk of boots on steel reaching them through their suits, the two People walked aft along the Cylons' hull. Not for the first time, Urun wished he had eyes in the back and sides of his head. It wasn't the easiest thing, trying to keep his footing on the hull and also watch for whatever dangers might pop out of it at them. They were less vulnerable here on the hull than they'd been out in space, and they could inspect it more closely -- but they were also making enough noise to wake a sleeping alien, or a powered-down Cylon.

Seen close up, the SEGA's hull was even more scarred, gouged, and patched than Urun expected. The SEGA was not only several hundred years old. She had apparently spent most of that time in space.

Where had she been? Urun wanted to scream that question out into the vacuum of space.

About halfway to the stern, they found what had obviously once been an emergency hatch. Unfortunately, it was just as obviously welded shut from the inside. Getting in through it would be only a little easier than cutting through the main hull.

After another two dozen steps, the radiation level around them was so high that Urun pressed his helmet against Makra's.

"Time we turned back. We won't be getting in through anything back here, even if it's working. The engines must have started leaking more radiation in the last few minutes."

"We could have SHARER maneuver to make a complete scan of the SEGA," Makra suggested.

"No. I don't want them where they can't see us. That would slow their shooting."

Yet it was becoming hard to believe there was going to be any need for more shooting, in spite of the Cylons' previous show of hostility. As the two People retraced their steps along the liner's hull, there was hardly any sign anyone was even alive inside her now. At one place, a hole leaking vapour made them stop for an analysis. It turned out to be coolant leaking from the refrigeration system of a computer. There were vibrations they could feel underfoot when they stopped, but they were faint and might have been from malfunctioning equipment.

Urun wasn't quite ready to break radio silence, but he was definitely getting impatient. He decided to risk moving forward and

trying to attract the attention of whatever Cylons might still be stationed on the bridge. If he couldn't wake up anybody inside after that, he'd not only break radio silence but also bring SHARER alongside the liner and use her weapons to peel off a section of the hull.

If they only had a radio transmitter they could seat into the hull and start signalling... But that was another piece of equipment Scouts used to carry...

They passed their touchdown point and kept going. The steady plodding pace along the hull was now so familiar that Urun turned his eyes upward, toward SHARER hanging in space. She seemed to be overhead now, instead of off to one side, as she'd been when they landed. The SEGA still wasn't completely motionless, although she was turning so slowly...

Urun was still looking at the stars when the hatch ahead blew out. So it was Makra who saw the alien and the Cylon ride out into space on a gush of escaping air. And it was Makra who saw the Cylon fire its laser at the alien and hit it, slicing through its spacesuit to chop off a leg. Freezing air and blood made a fog around the two tumbling bodies, but neither of the People had any trouble picking out the Cylon. Makra fired first, hitting the Cylon squarely in the chest with a bolt that must have melted half its vital systems.

Urun turned to Makra and held her briefly, as closely as their suits permitted, while they touched helmets. "Good shooting. This time, I was stargazing."

"No harm done, I think."

The two bodies were moving away from the liner so rapidly that there was no point in jetting off after them. However, it would be worth having SHARER lock tractor beams on them and pull them aboard. Another of the aliens would be invaluable, and a Cylon of the long-forgotten model which had to make up the crew of any ship this ancient would be nearly as big a prize.

"The Cylons and the aliens seem to be fighting, although one incident doesn't make a whole war," he observed. "We're going inside with that in mind. Urun out."

He touched helmets with Makra again. "As far as I'm concerned, we're on the side of the aliens. Don't shoot at one of them unless it shoots first, and even then, try not to kill. You don't have to be so careful with the Cylons."

"I understand. But won't the Cylons be able to answer some of our questions?"

"They could, but they probably won't. If we make friends with the aliens, they should be able to tell us what we need to know about the ship, as well as about themselves."

Urun wasn't entirely sure he wasn't rationalising more than a little, but he didn't much care. Dead Cylons could tell no tales about themselves and their ship, but neither could they tell any tales about alleged "crimes" by the People. Only a few years before Urun joined the Scouts, there'd been cases of ship captains executed on Cylon evidence for such "crimes." While Sector Seven no longer paid that much attention to keeping the Cylons happy, there was always the possibility the custom could be revived under enough Cylon pressure. If it was, Urun had no intention of being the first victim.

"That may mean telepathy," Makra said.

"It may. So you stay behind me when we go inside the ship. And don't try to rescue me if things get bad. Right now, I'm expendable. You're not."

"I..."

"That's an order, Technician."

She stepped back and saluted, with a smile that softened the sarcasm of the gesture. Urun was relieved to see she could still recognise a military situation, even if he had to make it bite her in the tail!

He hoped he could do as well. For a moment, he stood on the edge of the hatchway, peering down into it. It was cramped, and utterly black until he shone his torch into it. The light showed nothing but a locked inner hatch, with some signs of hasty welding and reinforcing around its frame.

Probably strengthened to hold pressure. The Cylons always built their larger ships with double hulls for better temperature control. An emergency hatch in a double-hulled ship would be easy to convert into an airlock like this one.

However, all this speculation wasn't getting him anywhere, and the airlock looked just as cramped now as before. Urun checked his gear to make sure there was nothing loose or likely to snag, then slowly lowered himself through the hatchway.

(To be continued.)

John Jones IX wishes to assure the readers of "Allies" that he is not spinning it out this way out of a desire to subject them to the literary equivalent of the Chinese water torture. He has an extremely demanding schedule of professional commitments for at least the next couple of months. He asks the readers of what is rapidly turning into the first BATTLESTAR GALACTICA fan novel to be tolerant, and also not to throw anything at the Senior Editor of "Purple and Orange?" — who is a dear good friend and in no way to blame!

J. J. IX



EDITORIAL: We Remain

As of this writing, we have nothing good to report to our readers. As we all know, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA was cancelled last year, and ABC-TV replaced it this winter with GALACTICA 1980. The verdict is in on the replacement series -- and by mid-September, it, too, will be gone. Glen Larson remains optimistic, however, that GALACTICA's loyal fans will force the network to change its mind once more. We have the potential to create another STAR TREK...

We'd like to point out a few things to our readers this issue. First, we are introducing a number of new writers and artists to our fans, and one of them might be a little confusing. So let us begin by saying there is no -- repeat, no -- relationship between Clyde Jones, the delightfully warped mind responsible for "Dementia," and John Jones IX, the professional author who, under an assumed name, is writing "Allies" for us.

Also, we'd like to extend a warm welcome to Clyde -- and to Anne Cecil, Sharon Monroe, David Morgan, Robert Smerp, Tomasina Artis, Larry Haus, Mary Jean Holmes, Marj Ihssen, Tanje, and Hugo nominee Joan Hanke Woods. We're proud to have all of them represented in this issue of "Purple and Orange?" and look forward to seeing even more from them in the future.

We're starting to run some GALACTICA 1980 fiction, too, and will continue to do so if you, our readers, want it. Also, we're looking forward to printing more original OSIRIS material and welcome any such stories from our readers. Response to this fiction has been most favourable; people seem to like the idea of adding a personal touch to a science fiction universe, and the OSIRIS happily welcomes all new members to its "crew."

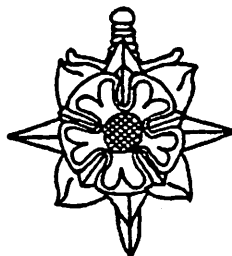
And please enter our "Lock Athena Into a Closet" contest -- we don't want our Humour Editor to inflict her views on the rest of the world. Please! Please?

Seriously, we're glad so many of you out in fandom enjoy reading "Purple and Orange?" -- and we promise to try to go on as long as you want us to. And we look forward to meeting some of you at Windycon in Chicago (24 - 26 October 1980 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel), where we plan to have our seventh issue on sale for the first time.

Well, GALACTICA is gone -- forever, if the network has its way; not so long, if we prevail. And even if "the last battlestar" never flies the television airways again, we all know it survives -- for we, the fans, remain.

See you in October.

---Joy Harrison
Senior Editor



"PURPLE AND ORANGE?" STAFF

Publisher.....Battlestar OSIRIS

Senior Editor/Editor.....Joy Harrison

Editor's Editor.....Ligia d'Temmenki

Art Editor.....David Morgan

Humour Editor.....Lisa Golladay

Instigator.....Leah Bestler

Layout/Paste-up.....Joy Harrison
Marj Ihssen
Clyde Jones

Typist.....Kyri de Morgan

Proofreaders.....Dick Gaynor
Frank Prohaska
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Editor's Assistants.....Steve Casey
Marj Ihssen
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Artists.....Artis
Steve Casey
Laurie Farkas
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Mary Jean Holmes
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Paulie
Willie Peppers
Tanje
Joan Hanke Woods

Special Consultants.....Dr. Steve Brandt
George Breo
Pat Kasberger
Frank Prohaska

Publicity.....All of the Above

"PURPLE AND ORANGE?"
c/o The New Fantasy Shop
5651 West Belmont Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60634